

Hodding Carter on the Press ■ Stealth Escapes Detection ■ Those Gee-Whiz Genes

COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

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INSIDE POLAND

Breaking the news blockade



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The thought is by Elbert Hubbard. The interpretation is by Corita Kent of Immaculate Heart College.

In the eighties,
we face unprecedented problems.
The survival of society, even mankind,
depends on our willingness to seek
new solutions.

Only by trying
can we hope to solve
the perplexing problems of our time.
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There is no failure
except
in no longer trying

Elbert Hubbard

Conita



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Your relatives will be, too.

VOLKSWAGEN DOES IT AGAIN



CONTENTS

6 To assess the performance of journalism in all its forms, to call attention to its shortcomings and strengths, and to help define — or redefine — standards of honest, responsible service . . . to help stimulate continuing improvement in the profession and to speak out for what is right, fair, and decent

—Excerpt from the *Review's* founding editorial, Autumn 1961

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CHRONICLE

L.A.: rumble on the police beat

In many cities throughout the country, the press and police are having a hard time getting along these days. In Miami, for instance, the police chief has accused the local papers of making his department's job harder by writing sympathetic stories about criminals. The Philadelphia police department has sniped at the press for its tough reporting on officers' treatment of local minorities. But nowhere, perhaps, have relations soured as much as they have in Los Angeles.

Tensions have become so great that representatives of the press and local law enforcement agencies have begun attending monthly lunch meetings to air gripes and discuss how to avoid antagonizing one another. The Police Protective League, to which many local officers belong, has been so concerned with its members' image, especially as portrayed in the press, that last July it signed a million-dollar contract with an advertising agency in an effort to "humanize police officers," as one league spokesman put it. And some reporters on the police beat say their work has suffered because of a lack

of cooperation from police officers.

Mistrust has been particularly strong since last November, when sheriff's deputies, attempting to disperse an anti-shah demonstration by Iranians in Beverly Hills, roughed up some reporters and photographers and handcuffed a TV reporter and soundman. Both sides agree the incident was a low point in Los Angeles police-press relations. But, while perhaps the most explicit confrontation, the incident was but one flashpoint in a larger pattern of conflict whose effects are continuing to be felt keenly by reporters.

For many years, the Los Angeles Police Department, perhaps the most respected police unit in the country, was virtually immune to press probing. The *Times*, the overwhelmingly dominant newspaper in the area, limited its criticism to police officers involved in sex and gambling scandals — stories the LAPD itself had uncovered and made public. During the 1960s, young *Times* reporters who were sympathetic to antiwar demonstrators and to minority activists often found negative references to the police edited

out of their stories. When reporters did manage to get into print evidence of police wrongdoing, they would often find their editorial page supporting the police. And the *Times*'s competitors, both print and broadcast, generally followed the paper's lead.

The calm was shattered in 1977, when a uniformed LAPD officer, dubbed "The Lying Masked Marvel" by then-police chief Ed Davis, appeared on KABC-TV's *Eyewitness News*, a diver's hood and a mask concealing his identity, and accused the department of brutality and racism. Police officials immediately attacked the broadcast as grossly irresponsible and unfair, but the interview, part of a long-term investigation into police activities that won KABC a Peabody award, served notice that the police would now be considered fair game.

Then came the Eulia Love affair. In 1979, Love, a thirty-nine-year-old black woman, got into a dispute over a bill with a gas company serviceman. She attacked him with a shovel and then, after two police officers arrived, threatened them with an eleven-inch

Policing the press: KTTV reporter Judi Bloom is arrested while covering an anti-shah rally in Beverly Hills last November



Bob Halvorsen, Valley News



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boning knife. The officers shot and killed her with eight bullets.

Those shots were to ricochet through the Los Angeles news media for many months. The *Herald-Examiner*, Los Angeles's struggling afternoon paper, which had been looking for some way to make its presence felt, spared no resources in getting to the bottom of the Eulia Love case. For three months, while the *Times* virtually ignored the matter, the *Herald* ran one story after another, many of them on the front page, documenting in great detail how, in the paper's view, the police had overreacted. The paper also exhaustively chronicled the life of Eulia Love. And when there was nothing left to write about her, they wrote about her children. Many, both within the LAPD and without, criticized the reporting as sensationalistic, sob-sister stuff.

But the criticism directed at the *Herald* was minor compared to that aimed at the *Times* for its coverage of the Love shooting and, more generally, of the way police conducted themselves in the city's minority communities. That criticism, says *Times* media critic David Shaw, "convinced the editors to bite the goddamned bullet and say, 'Okay, we blew it. Now let's get our ass in gear and do the best job we possibly can.'"

The paper assigned a four-reporter task force to the Love case and published its findings some three months after the shooting, allotting it the better part of eight pages in its April 16 edition. Follow-up stories appeared for weeks thereafter.

Since then, the *Times* has been noticeably more aggressive and comprehensive in reporting on police activities. But Tom Plate, associate editor of the *Herald*, claims his paper's rival "still has a long way to go." Plate, who worked for *Newsday* and *New York* magazine before arriving at the *Herald*, says the *Times* is "still doing puff pieces on the police," citing in particular a recent *Times* story on a day in the life of Police Chief Daryl Gates.

As far as the police are concerned, however, coverage has been all too thorough. Lieutenant Dan Cooke, an LAPD spokesman, says he has counted 247 stories in the two dailies on the Love case alone, adding, "That just is not fair. There was an inordinate amount of space devoted to that story." Chief Gates, too, has been critical of the press's performance. "We keep getting hit over the head by the media, and we start to wonder if their role is just to cut us up," he told the *Times* last December.

Reporters, meanwhile, are feeling the ef-

fects of the continuing tension. Bill Boyarsky, city-county bureau chief of the *Times*, says that when he arrived at the scene of a recent murder, none of the officers present would talk with him. And a Los Angeles-based correspondent for a national magazine says he fears stories he has written about the department — stories he believes were not especially critical — may affect his ability to get interviews with local officers. "The faintest hint of criticism will put them into a frenzy," he says.

The police deny charges that they are overly defensive. According to William Booth, chief press officer for the LAPD, the department has a "comprehensive press policy" that encourages all officers to speak with reporters. Reports of tension between his department and the press have been "grossly exaggerated," he says, adding that "in the last few months news coverage has been very fair and balanced." Or, as Wayne Satz, the KABC reporter who conducted the "Masked Marvel" interview, puts it, maybe the police are simply "getting used to living with" more intense press scrutiny.

Katharine Macdonald

Katharine Macdonald works for The Washington Post in Los Angeles.

High, hard, and inside

On June 18, 1980, sportswriter Ed Fowler reported in the *Houston Chronicle* that, in a game the previous night against the Chicago Cubs, star Astro pitcher James Rodney Richard "had run up 8 strikeouts when he left after 5 innings with what he termed a 'dead arm.'"

So began a six-week ordeal for Richard that, in one sense, ended when he collapsed from a stroke during a workout on July 30. In the wake of his tragedy, all of Houston, including its sportswriters and broadcasters, registered its shock and grief. But the press treatment he received before it was clear that he was, in fact, a sick man, has been harshly criticized. As Richard's agent, Tom Reich, complained, "There was a steady barrage of articles creating an inference that J.R. was a malingerer, a head case." *Sports Illustrated*, in an August 18 cover story by William Nack, observed that "the Houston media went after" Richard and, together with fans and even teammates, "accused him variously of loafing, gutlessness or being jealous of teammate Nolan Ryan's more lucrative contract." Now, although the baseball season has once again reached its wintry end,

the story of J. R. Richard and the Houston sports press will not wait until next year.

Few would challenge the conclusion that Houston's reporters and columnists came off poorly in the episode. But few parties behaved much better. All to some extent fell prey to a larger set of emotions expressed by a baseball-mad city in an era when the public has developed uncommon expectations of athletic performance.

Throughout the early months of the season, Richard, owner of an \$800,000-a-year contract, was carrying on his back the pennant hopes of a team that for many years had been the doormat of the National League West division. The fireballer was the Astros' workhorse, having not missed his turn in the pitching rotation in five years, and in 1980 he was off to his best start ever.

Then, as Richard's arm began to bother him, "What's wrong with J.R.?" quickly became the second of the summer's hot J.R. mysteries. The questioning soon became more serious after Richard took himself out of games early on June 28 and July 3. Even then, however, most reporters remained cautious. Kenny Hand of *The Houston Post*,



Wide World

for instance, referred circumspectly to Richard's "unsure" status.

But the readiness to fault Richard grew, fed by his own erratic behavior. After complaining to the *Chronicle*'s John Wilson, among others, that there was "no way" he'd be able to pitch in the July 8 All-Star game in Los Angeles, the temperamental pitcher started for the National League and threw two shutout innings, striking out three.

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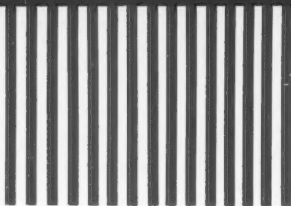
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Angeles sports medicine specialist, Richard told both his teammates and reporters that the doctor had ordered him to take thirty days off to rest and "go fishing" because he was "mentally fatigued." But when the doctor's report arrived at the Astros' front office a few days later, it noted only that Richard suffered from a "muscle fatigue syndrome" and recommended only a slightly lighter work schedule. Then, in his next start in Atlanta on July 14, Richard yanked himself in the fourth inning, complaining variously of arm problems to manager Bill Virdon and of an upset stomach to the press. The latter complaint was elaborated on during a postgame interview throughout which Richard munched on fried chicken — a detail that figured prominently in the next day's stories. And, to make matters worse, on the following day Richard shrugged the whole episode off and snapped that he'd lied about the thirty days' rest because "I felt like it."

By this time, almost a month after Richard's problems had surfaced, even Richard's teammates were complaining in not-for-attribution interviews with the press, and the fans were apoplectic. Sensing the pennant slipping away, they flooded radio call-in shows with claims that Richard was a "head case," that he was "dogging it," even that he was "doing heavy drugs." The *Chronicle's* "Fan Flak" write-in column was deluged with letters to similar effect. And now the newspapers and TV stations jumped on the bandwagon, replacing their previous caution with biting reports that "J.R. did it again."

The surge of criticism was slowed somewhat after a comprehensive examination at Houston's prestigious Methodist Hospital located an "arterial circulation impairment" in Richard's right shoulder. But after initially expressing relief, the Astro brass were soon downplaying the seriousness of their star's ailment, an attitude reflected in a July 27 *Post* headline, SLIGHT CIRCULATION PROBLEM FOUND IN JR'S SHOULDER.

It was far from slight, however, and on July 30, after warming up for ten minutes during a private workout in the Astrodome, the thirty-year-old pitcher collapsed. He was rushed to the hospital, where he almost died in surgery; the stroke left him with numbness in the left side of his body, raising the question of whether he would ever pitch again.

Immediately, everyone from Richard's wife, Carolyn, to the fan in the street blamed the press for Richard's trauma. The call-in shows now featured irate fans accusing the "vicious" press of having "almost killed" J.R.

The press itself was full of mea culpas.

Dan Patrick, the flamboyant sports director at KHOU-TV, took to the air with a semi-tearful apology to Richard. And Mickey Herskowitz, long-time columnist for the *Post*, observed in an August 3 column that "our concern and shock were mixed with embarrassment and we ought to admit it."

Both *The New York Times* and *Sports Illustrated* raised the possibility that the coverage of Richard, a black, may have been racially motivated. But both accounts neglected to mention that, until Richard's situation became really baffling, Nolan Ryan, who is white, and who also pitched erratically, had been accorded much rougher treatment.

More relevant are the problems Houston reporters encountered in dealing with Richard as an individual. The pitcher was generally considered to be "difficult," prone to inconsistencies and high-handedness in dealing with reporters. As a result, Houston's baseball writers, a tightly-knit fraternity, undoubtedly were harder on him than they would have been on such players as the affable Joe Niekro, another Astro pitcher.

But other, more complex factors were at work. While the sports press often leads fans in their displeasure, in Houston the reverse seemed to be the case. As fan sentiment began seeping into newspaper columns, and, in turn, sportscasts, the press by the end was itself whipping up public sentiment.

Ironically, Richard might have been given an even harder time by the press if he had been pitching in another city. As KTRK-TV sports director Bob Allen points out, "Houston sports media are among the softest in the country," and local news organizations generally do little to encourage their reporters to look behind the "team line." "Can you imagine what this would have been like if the same thing had happened in New York or Chicago or L.A.?" he asks. "It would have been unmerciful."

That is small solace, however, to J. R. Richard. Houston's press will have much to think about during the off-season.

Joanne Harrison

Joanne Harrison is senior writer for Houston City magazine.



Wide World

The latest AP pole

During the presidential campaign, the Associated Press acquired exclusive rights to a tree (left). Located across the street from Ronald Reagan's Pacific Palisades, California, home, the tree was leased to the AP for fifty cents a day by one of Reagan's neighbors and was used by the AP to hold its telephone. The phone allowed AP reporter Brian Bland to file stories on Reagan's important activities, such as going to the grocery, without having to drive a mile to the nearest pay phone. Other news organizations had their own outposts: NBC had a maid's quarters, ABC rented a garage, CBS used a fence. The AP telephone had an unlisted number and was kept in a locked box, perhaps to prevent the tree from being tapped. S.H.

continued



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¹ Another popular technique is the "paper" car—a phantom automobile registered and insured solely to be reported stolen, then collected on. Thanks to such methods, auto theft *in general* is accelerating at over 10% a year, and cost Americans \$2 billion plus in 1979.

² Aetna participated in the 1978 National Workshop on Auto-Theft Prevention and was a primary sponsor of last year's Connecticut Auto-Theft Reduction Seminar.

³ A "fraud profile" asks such questions as: Was the theft reported within 60 days of the

insurance policy's effective date? Or was it *not* reported to the police—a basic policy violation? Was the car recovered burned, and hence of no value except to support a claim? Can the claimant produce no ownership title at all? The more suspicious answers, the higher the red flag gets

hoisted.

⁴ Aetna supports standardizing title procedures and effective disposition of vehicle identification numbers at the wrecking yard. This would put the brakes on "paper" car theft by giving every legitimate vehicle its own "birth" and "death" certificates.



Challenging apartheid on the newsstands

A sprightly new monthly magazine in Johannesburg, *Frontline*, is attempting the unprecedented in South African journalism — to appeal to both black and white readers. Owned and edited by a fast-talking ex-newspaperman named Denis Beckett, it has reached (after four issues) a circulation of 8,000, half black and half white. This makes it unique in South Africa, where there are separate newspapers and magazines for Afrikaans-speaking whites, for English-speaking whites, and for blacks.

Even the respected and liberal *Rand Daily Mail* and the Johannesburg *Star* publish two separate editions: a standard "late final" or "stop press" for whites, and an "extra" or "Africa edition" for blacks. The extras are sold almost exclusively in black areas. The inside pages of the two editions are substantially the same, but the front and sports pages are designed to appeal to differing white and black interests. For instance, "in sport," says Beckett, thirty-two, who is white but has had the rather atypical experience of extensive work on black newspapers, "whites prefer rugby, and blacks soccer. An extra

with a rugby lead would sell fewer copies."

But, he adds, "the policy fortifies the spirit of segregation here. It especially gives whites the impression this is a white country, with a gang of blacks out there somewhere. We have to learn to swallow one another's interests."

Frontline's contents are decidedly eclectic. In a recent issue, for instance, a long piece on a black trade-union activist was followed by an article about a former cabinet minister who is a favorite among white conservatives. Two pieces by ideologists of the ruling National Party appeared cheek-by-jowl with impassioned arguments by blacks for majority rule.

In launching his magazine, Beckett pulled off a coup by persuading Dr. Nthato Motlana, a well-known Soweto leader, to write a monthly column. "Some whites were amazed to learn that Motlana is heavily pressured from his left," Beckett said. "They had thought it impossible to be more militant than he is."

The magazine uses language that is simple without being patronizing. Beckett explains, "The condition of black schooling here means that we have many people who are intelligent without being highly educated. They do not lack interest in heavyweight is-

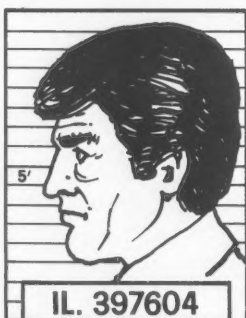
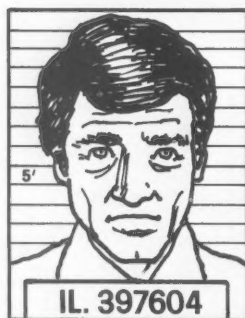
sues, or ability to understand the concepts, but have a lot wrong with their grasp of five-syllable words in English."

He acknowledges that censorship prevents his magazine from airing the full range of views. He cannot, for instance, publish anything that promotes the interests of the outlawed African National Congress, the guerrilla organization that enjoys broad and growing support in the black community. "I have two choices," he says. "I can print all the relevant news, get thumped right away, and go out with a nice little bang. Or I can do what's permissible. The first alternative is honorable, but I've chosen the second to see what I can do."

Beckett runs the monthly by himself, with the help of a secretary. He is about \$12,500 in the red at present but is starting to turn the corner as ads and subscriptions pick up. He is aiming for a circulation of 30,000.

He intends *Frontline* to be part of an effort to promote dialogue among South Africans of different views and thus possibly avoid the internal guerrilla war toward which the country is sliding. He himself favors majority rule in a unitary state and hopes the country's current leadership can be brought around peacefully.

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Some 1600 people sent in entries. Fifty were winners, including Kathleen Coyle who provided the caption above.

Of course, we didn't do it just for

fun, but to remind you of an important point:

Xerox is a registered trademark of Xerox Corporation, and should only be used as a proper adjective, followed by a noun describing the particular product.

Naturally, we like people to use our name, but we like them to use it correctly.

We'd like to compliment Kathleen Coyle for the clever way she used our name. And thank her for using it right.

XEROX

One of America's award winning-est newspapers.

In the past few years the Jackson, Mississippi Clarion-Ledger has won more major journalism awards than almost any other newspaper in the country.



1977

Sigma Delta Chi Award for General Reporting
Scripps-Howard Foundation Roy W. Howard Public Service
Award (Special Mention)

1978

Associated Press Managing Editor's Award for Public Service
National Newspaper Guild Heywood Brown Award
American Public Health Association Award for Medical and
Science Writing
American Bar Association Silver Gavel Award
(Certificate of Merit)

Atlanta Press Photographers' Association National
Competition (two first place awards)

1979

Robert E. Kennedy Memorial Journalism Award for Print Media
(Grand Prize, All Media)
American Bar Association Silver Gavel Award

1980 (so far)

American Bar Association Silver Gavel Award
University of Missouri Business Journalism Competition Winner
Society of Newspaper Designers Silver Medal

Ledger

A Century

• • Copyright 1980. The Clarion-Ledger

• • Daily 30 Cents

Carter Reagan Gap Narrows



expected soon

...a complex
...it. We (pilots)
...del taxways and
...by the Federal
...also been criticized
...controllers, repre-
...onal Air Traffic Con-
...eral employees work
...FAA-operated control

exposure which they say is a step called for under
union procedures.
Thompson Field, which boarded about 130,000
passengers in 1979, is still a very safe and well-
designed airport, said local president Dave Gordon,
a former U.S. Air Force controller who came here
from Gulfport in April 1979.
FAA officials and independent aviation experts
contacted Monday point out complaints surface
ing here and elsewhere as tactics preliminary to
negotiations on contracts that expire March 15.

WASHINGTON (AP) — President
Carter, denying any impropriety in
his handling of the investigation into
brother Billy's Libya dealings, said
Monday night he has no plans to re-
lease Democratic delegates from
their commitments to vote for him.
At an extraordinary hour-long
news conference in which Carter de-
scribed the first family pressures on
his brother, the president ridiculed
the calls for an open convention that
have intensified due to the Billy
Carter affair. He characterized these
political moves as an effort to return
to a brokered nomination that
ignore the will of the voters.
The nationally broadcast news con-
ference began with Carter's 15-min-
ute statement concerning his brother
Billy and his relationship with the
Libyans.

Carter said that neither I nor any
member of my administration has
violated any law or committed any
impropriety in the case of brother
Billy's dealings with Libya.
He spoke of his brother in these
words:
"We are extremely close. I love
him."

percent, and we would pick up about
5 percent of the Kennedy delegation.
He said
Strauss met with Democratic dele-
gates at the convention in Denver but
said he did not press for a renewed
endorsement of the president. Nor did
the Democratic governors take sides
in the race fight.

Strauss said party unity was more
important than getting the governors
to reiterate the endorsement they vot-
ed the party's platform committee
told the failure to support the ERA now
would be a clear statement to people
across this country that we are re-
treating from our traditional support
of equality for women.

Donald Reagan, who is certain to
be nominated at the full convention
next week, opposes the amendment.
even though it has been endorsed by
Republican platforms dating back to
1940. Reagan aides say he would
probably accept a pro-ERA plank in
the platform if that is the conven-
tion's wish.

nonviolent change, as *Frontline* is doing, is very much in doubt. The current increase in unrest is in fact prompting the regime to tighten already stiff controls which now include a Police Act effectively prohibiting any stories on police activities without prior clearance. Similar measures relating to prisons and defense are in effect.

So, despite its conciliatory mission, *Frontline* will be hard-pressed in the months to come.

James North

James North, a pseudonym, is a free-lance writer working in southern Africa.

Name that source — or else

Many judges are feeling frustrated these days in their dealings with the press. State "shield" laws have forbidden them from sending reporters to prison for refusing to disclose confidential sources. And in those states where no such ban exists, judges have found reporters willing, even eager, to go to jail, where they usually receive applause for their disobedience. Now some judges presiding over libel cases are finding ways to relieve their frustration. Rather than jail reporters for refusing to identify sources, they

have simply declared those sources not to exist—thus making it much harder for reporters to demonstrate that their stories were based on reliable, albeit unnamed, sources. Should this novel approach catch on, many publications are going to have a hard time fending off libel claims. And, while the new sanction does not apply to grand jury or other criminal proceedings, press-freedom watchdogs are concerned. Sharon Mahoney, an attorney with the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, characterizes the new judicial philosophy as, "If the thumbscrews don't work, we'll try the iron lady."

An early example of the new approach occurred last year, when a New York appeals court ruled on CBS's refusal to divulge confidential sources in a libel case stemming from a 1976 *60 Minutes* segment. Dr. Joseph Greenberg accused the network of having falsely portrayed him as improperly prescribing amphetamine-type pills for use by one of his diet patients, who was interviewed on the broadcast. During pretrial proceedings, CBS, attempting to demonstrate it had not been irresponsible in its reporting, cited interviews it had conducted with half a dozen of Greenberg's other patients. It refused, however, to name them. In August 1979, an appeals court ruled that CBS was free to keep

its sources confidential but, if it did so, it could not cite interviews with them in defense of its broadcast. (The libel suit itself has yet to be decided.)

There are signs that the type of rule enunciated in *Greenberg v. CBS, Inc.* is catching on in other parts of the country. In New Hampshire, the *Concord Monitor* refused a court order to identify sources for a 1975 article claiming that a local police chief had failed a lie detector test regarding his role in a shooting incident. The police officer said he needed to know who the sources were in order to prepare his case, and the judge, agreeing, ordered disclosure. In upholding the disclosure order last May, the New Hampshire Supreme Court declared that because most newsmen have elected to go to jail rather than disclose sources, a new sanction other than contempt was necessary to protect the rights of libel plaintiffs. The result? A "presumption that the defendant had no source." Thus, when the case goes to trial in October, the *Monitor* will not be allowed to show that it relied on responsible, but unnamed, sources in researching its article.

It is doubtful that judges in Idaho have followed the litigation in *Downing v. Monitor Publishing Co.*, but two cases there in the last year have produced similar rulings. In one case, dating back to 1973, Jay Shelledy, then a reporter (and now executive editor) at the *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, refused to disclose a source in a libel suit brought by a local narcotics agent. Shelledy's article had questioned the claim of the officer, Michael Caldero, that his shooting of a man involved in a drug deal was a matter of self-defense. In addition to citing other evidence, the article quoted an anonymous police expert who cast doubt on Caldero's account. Caldero wanted to know who the expert was.

Shelledy refused to identify him, and an Idaho district judge ruled in 1977 that he must go to jail for his recalcitrance. That move, however, provoked a show of public support for Shelledy, and, as he appeared determined to defy the mandate anyway, the court revoked the order of imprisonment and instead, in December 1979, instructed the jury to treat Shelledy's refusal as an admission "that no such 'police expert' exists"—and so, presumably, that Shelledy had fabricated a portion of the *Tribune* article.

In the end, Shelledy was able to cite other, named sources who supported his story and thus convince a jury to decide ten to two in mid-September in favor of the *Lewiston* paper. Throughout the trial, *Tribune* lawyer Charles Brown says, the ruling on the anonymous police expert was his "biggest problem." With it, he says, the judge



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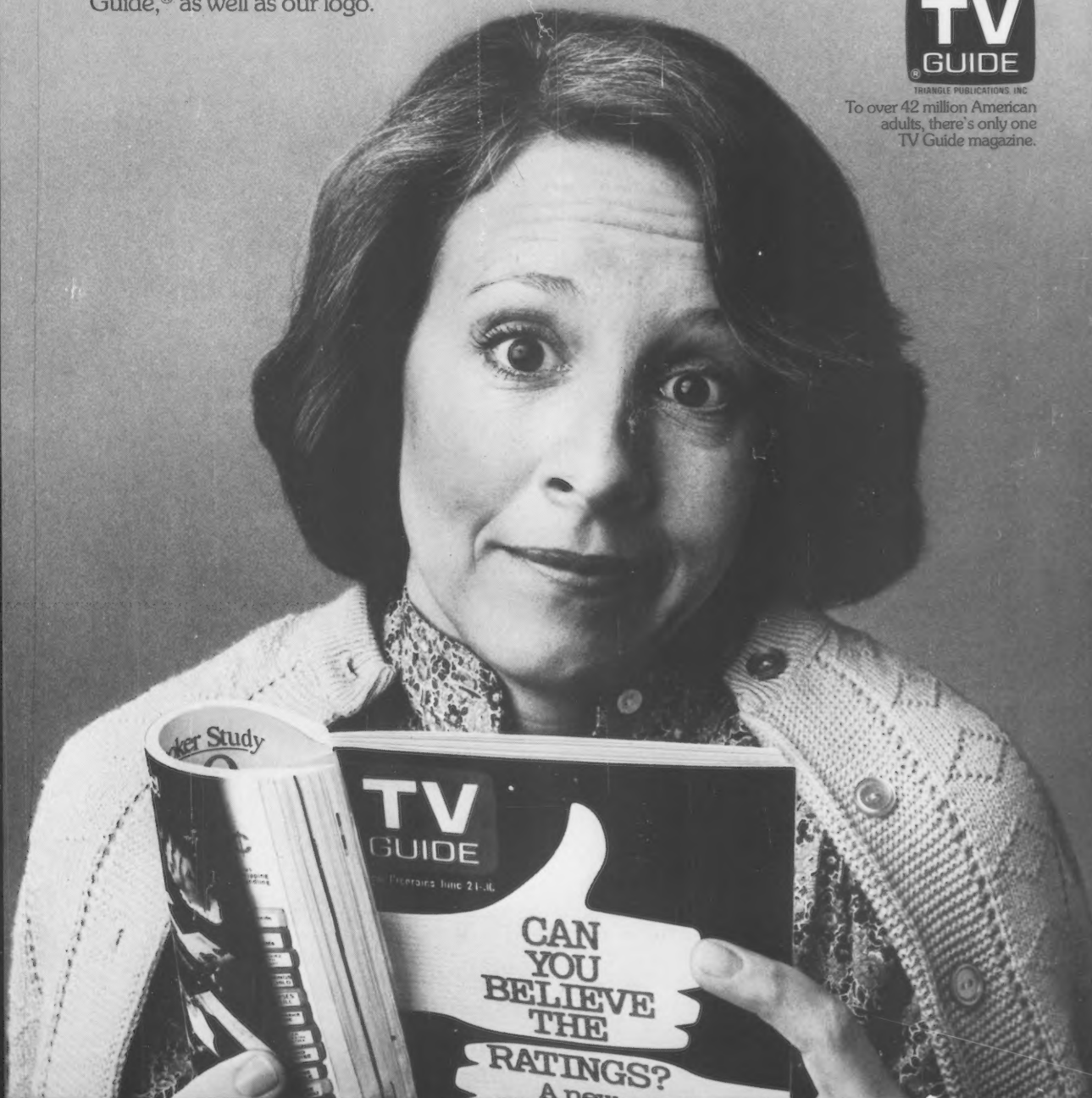
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Which makes us pretty unique. Along with Gudrun Zapf.



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If polio ever makes a comeback, we can all take some of the blame.

Right now, millions of our kids are not immunized against childhood's most dreaded diseases. Example: 19 million kids are at risk of becoming polio cripples.

What happened? In 1962, the biggest news in health care was the development of the Sabin oral vaccine for each of three poliovirus strains. In most of the world it replaced Salk vaccine, the first polio preventative (administered by injection). In 1963, after investing 16 years in polio research, Lederle Laboratories made mass immunization simple and practical by combining all three Sabin vaccines into a single oral vaccine. Soon, polio was on its way out.

Unfortunately, once the disease was under control, people stopped worrying about it — the general public, the press, the medical profession. We *all* relaxed our vigilance. So now we have work to do.

Let's work together. The drug industry has the vaccines. Physicians are ready to use them. But public health has always been a job for the community as a whole. No profession has shown more effectiveness in mobilizing community action than the news media — in the past, and right now.

(For more information on pharmaceutical research, write for our booklet "Response to Human Health Needs.")



LEDERLE LABORATORIES, A Division of American Cyanamid Co., Pearl River, New York 10965

might have simply dismissed the case for lack of evidence of malice.

If another Idaho judge had his way, papers like the *Tribune* would not even have the opportunity to cite other evidence. In Twin Falls, the *Times-News* was ordered to name the individuals it had consulted in researching an investigative piece on the Sierra Life Insurance Company, even though none of them was referred to in the article. When the paper refused, the judge declared that punishing the writers of the piece for contempt would "merely make them martyrs." Instead, he decided to find the paper in default and rule in favor of the plaintiff. The Idaho Supreme Court reversed that decision in September, saying the paper must be given a chance to prove the truth of its articles without relying on its unnamed sources. Still, the original ruling reflects the length to which some judges are prepared to go to penalize reporters for refusing to name sources.

Bruce Sanford, a libel lawyer in the firm of Baker & Hostetler, says the recent cases demonstrate that shield laws, which usually protect reporters from being held in contempt if they disobey disclosure orders, should be broadened to prohibit judges from directing reporters to disclose sources in libel cases.

The existence of such a sweeping law in Pennsylvania, he observes, prompted a federal court last April to uphold dismissal of a libel suit against Pittsburgh's WTAE-TV even though the station had refused to identify some of its sources for a report on an alleged meat-sale fraud. Without such a broad shield, Sanford says, "a lot of people will file libel suits not to collect damages but to discover who a source is and then punish him. That's why absolutely unqualified shield laws are of critical importance."

Seth Kupferberg

Seth Kupferberg is a writer and an attorney for the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

Foggy days at the Times

The *New York Times* is still (see "Have You Heard the One About the Traveling Salesman?" *CJR*, July/August) having trouble correcting mistakes.

On September 5 the *Times* told New Yorkers that they had just experienced their driest summer on record. The story was spread across most of the top half of the front page of the Metropolitan Report section. Five days later the paper ran a short "corrective" article; it hadn't really been the driest

summer on record; precipitation had only been "somewhat less than usual."

In correcting the error the *Times* placed all the blame on the National Weather Service and reported that the Weather Service had accepted the blame. This came as a surprise to Weather Service officials, who continue to deny that the error was theirs.

The *Times*'s original claim had been based on figures obtained by reporter James Feron, who wrote the story, and researcher Donna Anderson. Anderson prepared a chart, used with the story, in which average monthly rainfall in New York City for June, July, and August 1980 was mistakenly compared with total rainfall for all three months in other years. The chart purported to give rainfall figures for New York's ten driest summers; if it had been correctly prepared, 1980 wouldn't have been on the list at all.

Anderson and Feron attribute the confusion to Weather Service climatologist Louise Durall, adding that the errors appear in her notes of separate conversations with her. Feron quoted Durall as using the word "driest."

"I was startled when I read the story," Louise Durall says. She denies confusing the statistics and maintains that in their zeal to get a story the *Times* reporters must have

The John Hancock 14th Annual Awards for Excellence in Business and Financial Journalism

Once again, John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company will honor professional writers judged to have contributed significantly to reader understanding of business and finance through articles published during 1980.

Winners will be chosen in six publication categories with awards of \$2,000 in each category to be presented at an awards presentation program at one of America's leading academic institutions in the Fall of 1981. The 1979 awards were presented at a program jointly sponsored by John Hancock, the University of Houston and the Houston Chamber of Commerce on October 2, 1980.

Basic objective of the annual Awards for Excellence program is to foster improved public understanding of business and finance, with particular emphasis on lucid interpretation of the complex economic problems which affect the lives of all citizens.

For entry blanks and information, write "Awards for Excellence," c/o David J. Roycroft, Director, Public Relations, John Hancock Center, Room 1301, 875 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60611, (312-751-6808). Postmark deadline for submitting entries is January 15, 1981. Six unmounted copies of each entry must be submitted. Each entry must be accompanied by an official entry form.

Winners in Thirteenth Annual Competition

- Syndicated and News Service Writers
John Hanchette, Carlton Sherwood, and William Schmick - *Gannett News Service*
- Writers for National Magazines of General Interest
Tom Bethell - *Harper's*

- Writers for Financial-Business Publications
John Campbell, Gordon Williams, and William Wolman - *Business Week*
- Writers for Newspapers with Circulation above 300,000
William Neikirk and Richard C. Longworth - *The Chicago Tribune*
- Writers for Newspapers with Circulation of 100,000 to 300,000
Arnold Garson and Larry Fruhling - *The Des Moines Register*
- Writers for Newspapers with Circulation under 100,000
Dr. Thomas Brown and William N. Roesgen - *The Billings Gazette*

Judges

Dr. A. Benton Cocanougher, Dean of the School of Business, University of Houston

Toni House, Staff Reporter for the *Washington Star* and President of the Washington Press Club

Robert Dallos, Financial Reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* and President of the New York Financial Writers Association

Phil Dessauer, Managing Editor of the *Tulsa Daily World* and President of Sigma Delta Chi

D. Raymond Kenney, Business-Financial Editor of the *Milwaukee Sentinel* and President of the Society of American Business and Economic Writers.

John Hancock
Mutual
Life Insurance
Company
Boston, Mass.



DIFFERENT VOICES OF FREEDOM

The free expression of diverse viewpoints is essential in a democracy.

Gannett preaches that view, and its world of different voices practices it with vigor each day.

In California this year, the seven daily newspapers which are members of the Gannett Group demonstrated their editorial diversity and independence by expressing opposing opinions on several statewide ballot propositions.

On Proposition 4, which dealt with low-rent housing, two newspapers were for it, and four were against it.

Proposition 10, which would set state standards for local rent-control laws, won the editorial endorsement of the Salinas Californian. "We need standards. Investors need protection... Vote yes."

But The Sun in San Bernardino and four other Gannett papers opposed it. "Local communities should have the right

to solve their own problems, make their own mistakes and bail themselves out as they see fit," said The Sun.

Five editors of Gannett newspapers favored amending the state constitution to protect confidentiality of news sources. But the Independent-Journal in Marin County urged the amendment's defeat. "We think the media is adequately protected by present law."

On another proposition, the Stockton Record favored raising taxes on large oil companies as "a big step toward redistributing rising oil profits to the much-needed sector of public transportation." But the Independent-Journal opposed the tax as "just another way to punish the consumer." The Visalia Times-Delta was also opposed, noting that the tax might cause large companies to move plants and valuable jobs out of the state.

And a \$495-million park and conservation bond issue drew opposition from editors who thought the timing wrong in a recession or, as the Independent-Journal noted, it "clearly is a pork barrel measure and should be defeated."

Editors at the Oakland Tribune swallowed hard at the timing and the scope of the bond proposal, but advised voters to approve it: "If the project is turned down now, who knows how long it will be before another measure can be placed on the ballot and how much the cost of land will have gone up in the meantime."

Each Gannett newspaper forms its

own editorial opinions. Nobody tells local editors what to think or say at the Oakland Tribune and Eastbay TODAY, the Independent-Journal in Marin County, the Salinas Californian, The Sun in San Bernardino, the Stockton Record, the Visalia Times-Delta, or at any of the 74 other Gannett daily newspapers around the country.

Each Gannett editor marches to his or her own beat, and these are as different as the pulses of each editor's community. That is why Gannett newspapers, broadcast stations and other media are "A World of Different Voices Where Freedom Speaks."

Gannett believes in the freedom of the people to know, and pursues that freedom in every communications form we are in, whether it is newspapers, television, radio, outdoor advertising, film production, magazine or public opinion research.

That freedom rings throughout Gannett, from Oakland to Olympia, from San Bernardino to San Rafael, from Visalia to the Virgin Islands. It rings in news coverage, in editorial opinions, in community service. Each member serves its own audience in its own way.



GANNETT
A WORLD OF DIFFERENT VOICES
WHERE FREEDOM SPEAKS

mixed up some of what she was telling them. On the same day that she talked with Anderson, Durall says, she discussed statistics on the dry weather with a television reporter who used them without confusion.

Thus, it is not clear who is to blame for the confused statistics. But the *Times* certainly is to blame for a serious inaccuracy in the article the paper ran after a reader pointed out the error. The article began: "The National Weather Service said yesterday that it erred last week in describing June, July and August as the driest summer period on record in the New York area."

"I got pushed out of shape quite a bit when I read that," says Harold Gibson, meteorologist in charge of the National Weather Service in New York. "I'm dead sure nobody here said we made a mistake. It was the *Times*'s mistake."

The correction was written by regional editor Jonathan Friendly, who admits that he did not talk with the Weather Service himself. He consulted with Feron and Anderson, but neither of them recalls anyone at the Weather Service accepting blame for the mistake. The correction was conveniently incorrect.

Mitchell Stephens

Mitchell Stephens directs graduate studies in journalism at New York University.

Home free

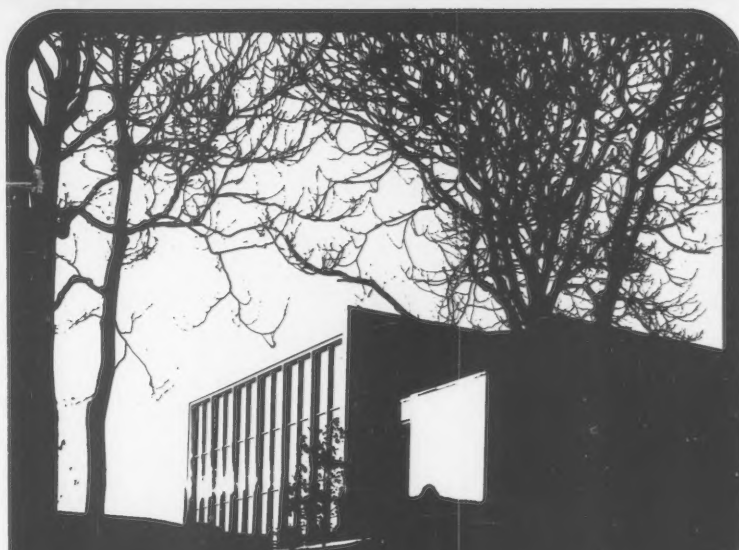
Last June 24, Alcibiades González Delvalle, a leading Paraguayan journalist, returned home from New York to Asunción despite the Stroessner government's having put out a warrant for his arrest (see "Going Home to Prison," *CJR*, September/October). He was duly arrested the day after his return and imprisoned for an article he had written criticizing Paraguay's criminal justice system.

Then, on September 2, seventy days after being jailed, González was released from the National Penitentiary and allowed to return to his newspaper, *ABC Color*, where he has since resumed writing his column.

He credits protest abroad with having helped to bring about his unexpectedly swift (by Paraguayan standards) release. Reached in the *ABC Color* newsroom, González said, "It is obvious the government needed a quick solution to my case and so was forced to do something to get me out of jail. And for that, I have to thank many people, especially the journalists in the United States and other countries who were concerned for me."

González's remaining concern is that he was granted only "conditional freedom," which means he could be jailed again. "I want a decree of absolute freedom," he says.

Laurie Nadel



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PUBLISHER'S NOTES

White House bedlam

Ralph Renick, the able news director of WTVJ-TV in Miami, publicly deplors the bedlam that prevails at White House news conferences. He wonders whether the shouting and screaming for attention may have contributed to the diminishing number of such conferences. Certainly the sight of scores of correspondents waving and yelling like kids at a Christmas party scarcely adds to the impression of a wise and intelligent press. And the telecasting of the conferences has clearly multiplied the number and intensity of appeals for the floor. Among some, the "Hi Mom" syndrome is obviously at work.

As one who used to cover those conferences, this writer wonders if the whole madhouse effect could be remedied by making it a firm rule that the only way for a correspondent to be recognized is to remain quietly in his seat and raise his hand. Any president who is not blind can choose among hand-raisers just as easily as among screamers.

While we are about it, perhaps the venerable White House Correspondents Association could organize itself to allocate the first two or three questions to White House regulars, on a rotation basis, with each reporter having the privilege of a follow-up question when appropriate. And perhaps a president, tired of chaos, would agree.

News Council absence

The unduly suspicious may look at this issue and ask if the *Review*, out of pique, has stopped publishing the reports of the National News Council. (See "News Council vs. *Review*," *CJR*,

September/October.) Not so. The Council issues only five reports a year, and this is the issue that normally carries no report. Despite our recent differences with the Council — and there have been others in the past — we remain committed to the proposition that its work in general is worthy and useful, and that its findings usually deserve attention. So the National News Council Report will be back at its old stand in the next (January/February) issue.

Review milestone

In 1981, as mentioned previously, the *Review* will observe its twentieth anniversary. It has weathered many problems and feels rewarded by the fact that its subscription renewal rate has just attained an all-time high. Still, there's no doubt that we could use added financial resources effectively to improve the magazine and its services. We hope for one or more gifts or grants to make this possible.

At the same time, we particularly solicit your suggestions and ideas on such questions as these:

What do you see as particularly compelling issues facing American journalism in all its forms?

Have you noted a singularly valuable service performed by the press or broadcasters in your area — and will you describe it?

Have you noted some singularly shoddy performance by a news medium in your area — and will you supply us with details?

Are there features in the *Review* that strike you as particularly good or particularly bad?

Are there types of articles that you

find particularly valuable or annoying?

Please send any such information along to the undersigned at this address: Columbia Journalism Review, 700 Journalism Building, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027. Our editors will then consider your ideas and suggestions and institute further investigation where appropriate. And all of us will be appreciative.

TV trends

At work again helping to choose duPont-Columbia award-winners in television, we are struck by certain trends:

□ TV documentaries, particularly at the local-station level, continue to improve in depth of investigation and in the polish of camera work and editing.

□ Public broadcasting, locally as well as nationally, is doing distinguished work in the arts, in discussion programs, and in certain types of documentaries. In the kinds of documentaries likely to offend significant groups, however, they are more timid than they once were and more timid than are many commercial broadcasters. It appears that those who control public television's purse strings — Congress, state legislatures, and corporate underwriters — exert more influence on content than do the sponsors of commercial TV programs.

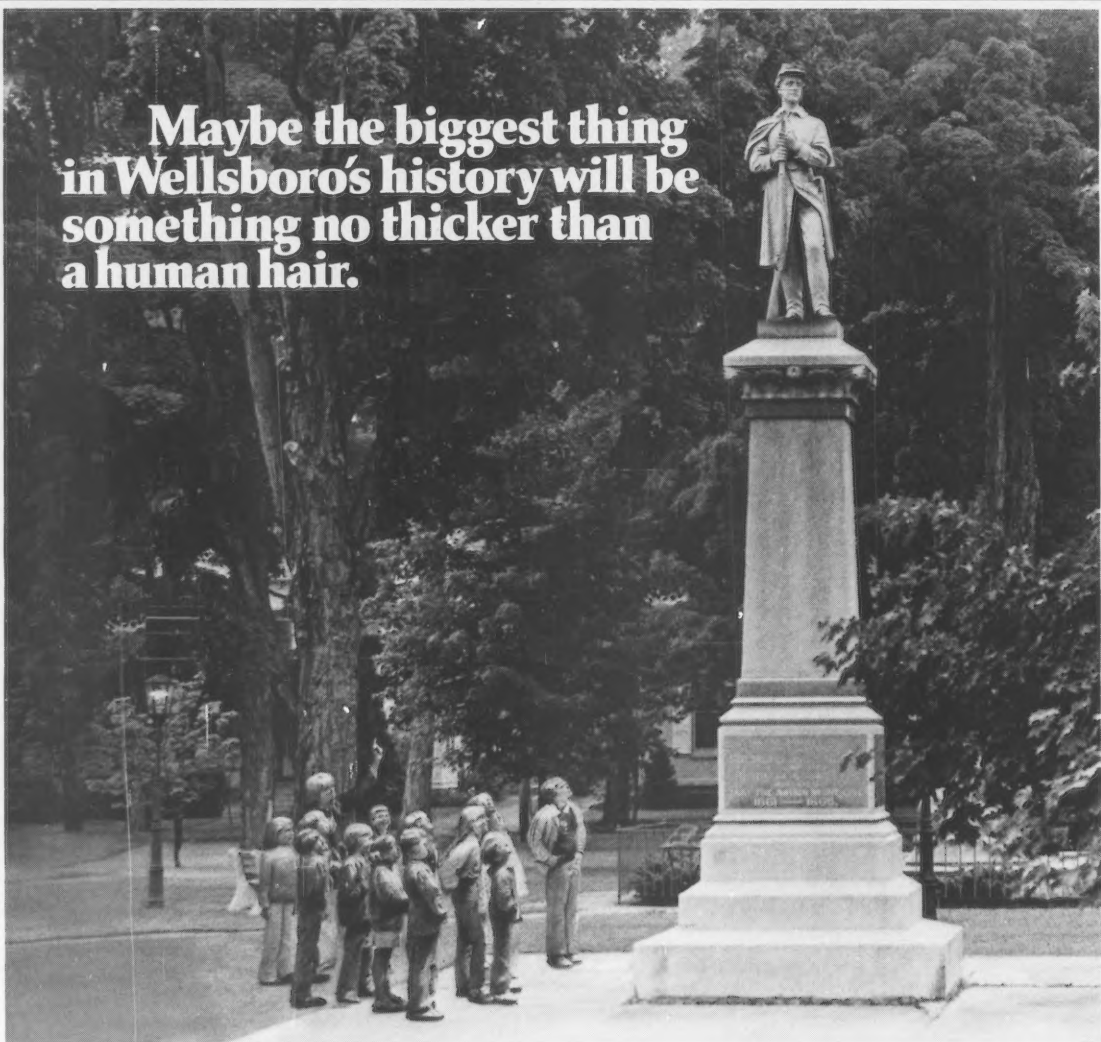
□ Television demonstrates increasingly its potential as a dramatizer of social ills. For example, two recent documentaries bring home shockingly the way in which some communities imprison for as long as two years, in squalid jails, impoverished people who can't post bail while awaiting trial to establish their guilt or innocence. E.W.B.

**"If all Printers were determin'd
not to print any thing till they
were sure it would offend no body,
there would be very little printed."**

Benjamin Franklin

NORTHROP
Making advanced technology work.

**Maybe the biggest thing
in Wellsboro's history will be
something no thicker than
a human hair.**



You could easily mistake Wellsboro, Pennsylvania for other small American towns.

But last year, Wellsboro (population: 4,003) made history.

It became the first town in America to put a commercial optical fiber telephone system into everyday use.

We should explain that optical fibers are threads of ultra-pure glass as thin as a human hair.

And over them, telephone signals can be transmitted by laser light.

What's so great about optical fibers? Well, if you wind them into a cable, you have a miracle telephone line.

Which can carry far more telephone traffic than conventional copper lines.

And these lines, which cost less than copper, aren't subject to noise interference from nearby power lines, as copper lines are.

It was an ITT scientist who first made optical fibers practical.

And ITT people, working with the Rural Electrification Administration and Commonwealth Telephone, brought fiber optics to Wellsboro.

Mind you, Wellsboro may still not loom as large in history as that other Pennsylvania town, Gettysburg.

But for Wellsboro (and America) it's quite a first.

**The best ideas are the
ideas that help people. ITT**

COMMENT

A freer press in Poland

The phrase "crisis in Poland" has always had in it the rumble of approaching tanks, and that's what many American reporters and analysts were listening for when massive strikes broke out in that nation in August. What they found instead was a people trying to argue, bluff, and threaten each other into devising some new and freer institutions — and doing so in a remarkably open way.

When the strikes in Gdansk began, Poland had a vigorous but harassed underground press, a lumpish and uninformative official press, and Western correspondents listening from more than a polite distance. Today, while the underground press remains strong (and slightly less harassed), official newspapers have begun the first steps toward real reporting and the Western media are watchful and informed. For students and members of the press this has been a particularly heady story — one which perhaps bears out a happy variant to Gresham's law: Good journalism can drive bad out of the market.

The underground press in Poland, whose remarkable flowering is described by Tadeusz Walendowski in the article that begins on page 31, was crucial not only in forging links between groups of workers and dissident intellectuals, but in forcing the government to open up the official press. Each new underground paper published over the last four years, no matter how limited its distribution, succeeded in making the controlled press ever more irrelevant. "Why should anyone bother writing a tricky, thinly-veiled analysis for the state press," asked political scientist Marcin Krol in Warsaw last year, "when he can publish exactly what he thinks in any number of underground journals? *Trybuna Ludu*, the Party daily, isn't even worth reading between the lines anymore."

It now seems clear that at a crucial moment during the Gdansk strike, the Party officials in charge admitted to themselves that though the instruments of control were still in their hands, they were at a serious disadvantage vis à vis the workers. Standing at the head of completely hollow and discredited institutions (the official unions, the bankrupt economy, the controlled press), they could hope to avert a major confrontation and possible Soviet intervention only by accommodating themselves to the alternative institutions in their society (the independent unions, the church, the underground press). It soon became clear, moreover, that the only way to reach such an accommodation was by doing so quite openly, with the whole nation, and indeed, the whole world watching.

When Western journalists came streaming into Poland in

the middle of August, they were amazed at the welcome they found. Not only were the almost 200 reporters who were finally accredited allowed to roam through the country reporting the story exactly as they saw it, but the Poles seemed to go out of their way to make sure that they had access to almost everyone. All of a sudden American television viewers were being treated to interviews with both strike leaders and politbureau chieftains — an event unprecedented in a Communist country, especially one in the midst of a crisis. The American networks were soon feeding their stories routinely out of the studios of Polish State Television and never once was there a question of censorship. Gene Randall of NBC News called his coverage of the Polish strikes "the single most satisfying and enjoyable experience of my career." As well it might be for a correspondent usually assigned to Moscow.

With this barrage of information pouring out of the Western press — and of course, pouring back into Poland via Western radio and through reports carried by underground publications — there was no way the state-controlled press could continue printing lies. The dam broke when the bus drivers went on strike in Warsaw — a fact that could hardly be kept secret from the city's one-and-a-half-million inhabitants. By the end of August the official press became as good a source as any on the basics of what was going on both at the Gdansk shipyards and at Party headquarters, and all at once the lines in front of news kiosks rivaled those in front of meat stores.

The press in Poland is still far from being free; the new leaders may try to tighten up again once they feel strong enough. In the meantime, papers must still be submitted for "preventive censorship" before publication; underground journals are still cranked out on illegal presses and distributed on the sly; Western news agencies have been told that before bringing a new employee into Poland they must first send an old one out. But the government has promised the workers to allow the press an unspecified amount of "greater freedom," the church has been allowed to broadcast masses for the first time in thirty-five years, and the underground press and a few stalwart Western correspondents are still in the country watching.

No one claims these reporters could stop the tanks if they ever did begin to rumble, but it's nice to have them there, just to keep everybody honest.

ROBERT HERSHMAN

Robert Hershman, a senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, formerly covered Eastern Europe for The MacNeil/Lehrer Report.

continued

The tale of the Arabian Night

There were no Safire harpings on what he might have called Pressgate; no Whistle-Blowing on the Press reports on network news; no Fourth-Estate Furor pieces in *Newsweek* or *Time*. Almost to a man — and woman — the media's gatekeepers barred the story of the internal scandal at the National Press Club.

A rare exception was *The Washington Post*, which gave the story front-page play. On May 25, capital locals were treated to a detailed account of the circumstances surrounding the dramatic resignation of the chairman of the NPC speakers committee, Richard Maloy. Maloy, who is Washington bureau chief for Thomson Newspapers, explained in a letter to club president Drew Von Bergen that his action had been precipitated by his discovery that the club had made a deal with the Arab League for a three-event package: in exchange for the league's promise to underwrite a \$40,000 gala Arab Night party for NPC members, Maloy had been told, the NPC had agreed to allow Arab League spokesmen to make political statements both at a *Newsweek's* Breakfast and at one of the club's prestigious Speakers Luncheons. The arrangement had come to light when Maloy, upon finding that the number of luncheon reservations was running well below the minimum normally required, had followed customary procedure and cancelled the affair. A pledge by the Arabs to take a block of 100 tickets so the luncheon could go on had not changed his mind, Maloy explained, because "presumably Press Club Speakers Luncheons are for the benefit of our members and not for special interest groups who desire access to our platform and the coverage provided. . . ." The cancellation had brought a telephoned protest from former Senator James Abourezk, attorney for the Arab League, demanding that the club make good on its "guarantee." "The Arabs were coming under pressure from their constituencies back home for spending so much money [on the gala]," Abourezk was quoted as saying in *The Washington Post*. "If the Press Club cancelled the luncheon, we wouldn't have anything to show for it." Finally, club president Von Bergen, a labor reporter for United Press International, had overruled Maloy and reinstated the luncheon, explaining to Maloy that the league had threatened to pull out of the Arab Night party unless the luncheon was held. ("Frankly, I don't blame them," Von Bergen wrote later in the May 29 issue of the *NPC Record*, while at the same time vigorously denying any quid pro quo.) And so Maloy had withdrawn. The breakfast, the luncheon, and the party, which had been scheduled for the last week in May, would proceed as planned.

When the Arab Night tents had been folded and the booths of the mock bazaar packed away, the club's Professional Issues Committee looked into the matter, and on August 1 delivered its report. Drawing a fine talmudic line, the committee concluded that there was no evidence to support Maloy's charge that a deal had been made, but that the

officers of the club had been "insensitive" to the possibility that the Arabs might think otherwise. More to the point, the committee strongly recommended that, in order to prevent such misunderstandings again, each of the various committees responsible for organizing club activities, including the speakers committee, should begin to operate with more autonomy. The PIC findings were taken up at the August 4 meeting of the club's board of governors, which sent them back to the committee "for further consideration." Although it has agreed to tinker with some details, the committee at its October 2 meeting decided not to alter its basic conclusions, and particularly its recommendations, in any substantial way.

Much like an oil spill spreading its slick, this whole sorry episode has left the press with an unsightly stain. Von Bergen, whatever his reasons for overruling Maloy, inevitably gave credence to the view that the club had been bought. Individual members of the speakers committee and the board, each of whom received a copy of Maloy's letter and a press release outlining the sequence of events, were thunderously silent in rallying to his support. The membership at large, some 5,000 strong, was busy

Darts and laurels

Dart: to *The Charlotte Observer*, for the dubious concoction on its August 2 editorial page — a 900-word editorial by the associate editor celebrating the opening of a new \$400,000 restaurant owned (as the piece acknowledged) by his brother.

Laurel: to the Fredericksburg, Virginia, *Free Lance-Star*. Digging into the prices and practices of itinerant gold and silver dealers operating out of local motels, staff reporters weighed in on August 6 with a solid story that led to the hasty departure of all the dealers, a reduction of traffic in stolen goods — and a loss to the paper of \$2,000 a week in revenues from the dealers' ads.

Laurel: to the *Baltimore Sun* and reporter C. Fraser Smith, for a five-month investigation into "The Shadow Government" — a closed-door system of free-wheeling financial operations run by unelected trustees in charge of the city's \$100-million development fund. The eight-day series of twenty-one articles revealed how the trustee mechanism, which was designed to circumvent bureaucratic obstacles to the administration's plans for a Baltimore renaissance, also bypasses competitive bidding, careful review, and voters' approval of public projects.

Dart: to *The Washington Star*, for watering the editorial soup. After running the first of a series of articles by syndicated food writer Goody Solomon on the ins and outs of grocery coupons, the editors permanently canned her column. The series, Solomon was told, conflicted with the *Star's* campaign to promote its coupon-laden food section.

Dart: to *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, for overly

looking the other way — or rushing for tickets to the sold-out bash. (An exception was *Minneapolis Star* editor Stephen Isaacs, who promptly resigned.) The press in general, awash in headlines about the questionable actions of the president's brother and the questionable actions of the Abscam dupes, apparently decided that the questionable actions of some of its own was a story the public did not need to know. And the Professional Issues Committee, in its well-meaning deliberations, in large part missed the ethical boat: as commendable as was its push for the strict separation of professional events and entertainments, it failed to confront the more basic problem of the entertainments themselves.

Setting aside the question of a quid pro quo, Arab Night, by all accounts, was far from unique, not at all unlike the dozen or so Japan Nights, Detroit Nights, and Maine Nights given each year by embassies, cities, states, and government agencies for the National Press Club's private pleasure. Party arrangements carefully conformed to the club's code of ethics, which, oddly enough, while not permitting contributions of food and liquor by outside sponsors except in the form of purchase-at-cost, somehow sees no harm in donations of music, entertainment, decorations, and help in

preparing the food. Nowadays, PIC members say with some pride, the lavish door prizes and favors that used to highlight these affairs are no longer allowed. Furthermore, they add defensively, the \$40,000 bandied about as the Arab Night tab is not really as high as it might seem, considering that it probably includes, among other things, the cost of sending the Arabs' speeches back home by Comsat satellite — not to mention the cost of importing the King of Morocco's palace chefs. Even ethics committees, it seems, would rather eat their cous-cous and have their principles too. Such a fantasy, however, might better befit the tales of Scheherazade than it does a real — and credible — press.

A lesson in listening

Seven years ago, one of the nation's greatest environmental disasters began when a trucker for a Michigan chemical company mistook sacks containing a toxic fire retardant for sacks containing a nutrient mixed into cattle feed. In the fall of 1973, hundreds of Michigan dairy cows sickened and died. In the spring of 1974 the toxic chemical was finally identified as poly-brominated biphenyl, or PBB. By this

solicitous concern for the well-being of politicians. The papers' ad department not only offered candidates free advice on writing and targeting campaign ads, but also provided instruction by the papers' editors in "creating news releases that get attention, sending releases to the right person," and "constructing an information file for the newspapers' use." (Revenue from 1980 political advertising, the department reports, is expected to be up.)

Laurel: to the *CBS Morning News*, whose small investment in a few phone calls yielded the useful news of the enormous range in brokerage fees charged by various firms around the country. The cost of buying 100 shares of IBM, advised business editor Ray Brady in his August 25 report, could vary from a low of \$25 at a Chicago discount house to as much as \$88 at Merrill Lynch, one of the network's bullish advertisers.

Laurel: to *The Washington Monthly* and writer Eric Black, for the September article, "The Great Contact Lens Con." Casting a cold eye on the history of the FDA's actions in regulating products for cleaning soft contact lenses, the article presents evidence that the agency may have been less concerned with safety and cost to wearers than with pleasing certain manufacturers of the lucrative liquid.

Dart: to Gannett's Cocoa, Florida, *Today*. When a Florida judge decided against Senate hopeful Lori Wilson in her suit to ease the requirements for getting on the ballot, the paper deemed it page-one stuff and introduced the story with a slug directing readers to "Ruling victory for discrimination, Editorial, 10A," in which *Today* took the judge to task for his "ridiculous" decision. Neither the article nor the editorial gave even a hint that the degree of the paper's interest may have had something to do with the fact

that Wilson is married to Allen Neuharth, the chairman of Gannett.

Laurel: to *The Daily Progress*, Charlottesville, Virginia, and reporter Woody Greenberg, for a nineteen-part June investigation of "The Chemical Peril." Among the several companies cited as dumping toxic wastes into area sewers and failing to comply with regulations to provide chemical analysis of the material: *The Daily Progress* itself.



Dart: to the *Boston Herald American*, for a wild pitch at humor that missed the plate: "The Herald American softball team relaxes after its second consecutive victory (an easy 9-4 win) over Boston's Alternate Daily Newspaper," ran the cutline of this July 15 photo of Afghan rebels.

time, many hundred more dairy cows — as well as beef cattle, and swine, and chickens, and dogs, and cats — had died, and the milk and the meat of cattle that had eaten the contaminated feed had been ingested by people all over Michigan.

Another three years were to pass before the *Detroit Free Press* and *The Detroit News* went beyond reporting official assurances that PBB posed no public health hazard and, in March 1977, began to run lengthy investigative articles that called those assurances into question. Why did it take them so long?

In the course of telling a much larger story, a book published this fall provides a set of answers to this question. The book is *The Poisoning of Michigan*, and its author is Joyce Egginton, New York correspondent for the British weekly *The Observer*. As Egginton sees it, the main reasons for the Detroit papers' sluggishness were threefold: excessive deference to official sources; the reluctance of "desk-bound editors" to encourage reporters to follow up on a "depressing story which was unlikely to produce good dramatic copy day after day"; and the difficulty urban reporters had in learning "the language of farming" and taking seriously what the farmers had to say — in some cases, ironically, because PBB-poisoning had made them incoherent. "We didn't realize it at first, nor did they, but many of those farmers had been physically affected by PBB . . .," Egginton quotes Richard Lehnert, editor of *Michigan Farmer*, as explaining. "They would keep going over events, and they couldn't get the chronology straight. . . . They would forget things and repeat others. It was like listening to a tape recorder. They would repeat and repeat and repeat."

Not all the farmers whose animals died were rendered incoherent by PBB, and it is possible that if reporters had simply listened more carefully to them they would not have ignored the story for so long. The *Observer's* correspondent did listen with care to many Michigan farmers, and this is what one of them told her:

The longer I lived on that farm the worse it became. . . . After a time there were no worms in the soil. There were no field mice, no rats, no rabbits, no grasshoppers. As the cattle were dying, the cats and dogs were dying too. A fully grown cat would live only six weeks on that farm. Our three dogs went crazy. Our neighbors had bees that were dead in the hives. The frogs were dead in the streams. There was a five-acre swamp that used to croak at night so you could hardly sleep. Then it was silent. And it was a long time before I knew why.

Desk-bound editors (we include ourselves), take note. You don't get quotes like that from bureaucrats.

Costumed news

TV anchorfolks have, for years, caught hell from critics of that medium for paying more attention to style — hair style, stylish clothes, and a style of humor guaranteed to crack up the rest of the news team — than to the news. The IRS, too,

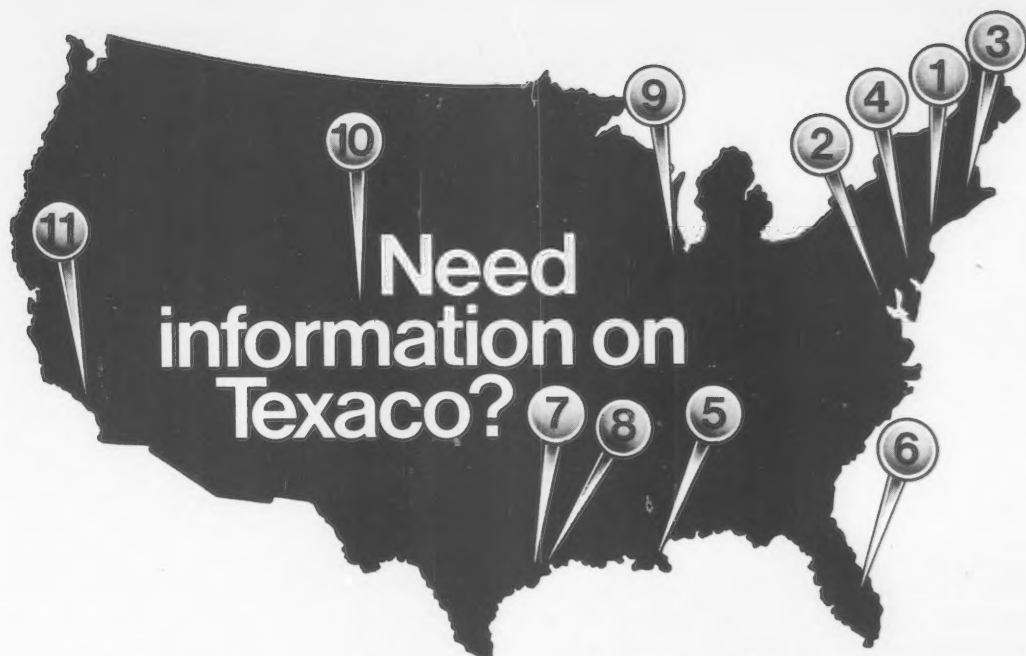
has been hard on them. When the anchorfolks try to deduct as business expenses all the money they are obliged to spend on clothes, haircuts, makeup, and so on, the IRS balks. Taking a hard line, the tax people insist that anchorpeople are journalists, not actors or performers, and add that the clothes the news readers wear in the studio can also be worn on the street.

Up in Boston, a TV anchorman named Jack Hynes has been fighting the IRS over this issue for four years. His case recently reached the U.S. Tax Court in Washington, D.C. — the highest court of appeals for such cases. Reporting on this flap for the *Boston Herald American*, columnist Monica Collins wrote in late September: "If he decides to go further, then Jack Hynes could take the question of television anchor apparel all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court." In which case, newspaper fashion writers would finally have a hard news story to cover.

Collins's front-page story, headlined CLOTHES MAKE THE ANCHORMAN, HYNES SAYS, BUT IRS DISAGREES, contained several interesting details. Hynes, for example, was quoted as saying: "One of the documents we introduced in court was a memo sent around by Channel 5 which advised us not to wear certain clothing on-air. I might buy six yellow shirts for my job which I would never wear on the street." A point well taken! Two points, actually: 1. The clothes prescribed for on-air wear are *not* necessarily the sort a tasteful fellow would wear outside the studio; and 2. It's those color-coordinating managers — backed up, no doubt, by consultants in double-knit polyester suits — who are ultimately to blame for the fix Hynes *et al* find themselves in. Some station managers are underwriting the cost of costuming their stars, Collins notes. At Hynes's station — WCVB-TV, an ABC affiliate — each anchorman now receives, according to Collins, an annual clothing allowance variously estimated at about \$2,000 (by the general manager) and at about \$1,000 (by Hynes). But in the tax years over which Hynes and the IRS find themselves in disagreement, he paid for his on-air clothes and his haircuts out of his own pocket.

Columnist Collins elicited a couple of quotes that hint at possible new costumes for anchors. "If TV news people wore Confederate costumes on the air," said an Internal Revenue spokesman, "then they could deduct the expense for them." And anchorman Hynes was quoted as saying, in jest, that if he loses his case, "I might not have any money to buy clothes. Maybe I'll start a new style and wear T-shirts and bib overalls when I do the news."

Viewed from afar, this wardrobe war seems merely funny. But it can hardly deeply amuse those caught up in it. While Hynes's crusade may save anchorpeople money on their taxes, it is a depressing reminder of the degree to which television station owners have blurred the distinction between journalists — which many TV newspeople pride themselves on being, and which the IRS insists they are — and natty entertainers, whose script just happens to be the news. ■



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CHILD RESTRAINT SYSTEMS IN CARS CAN LOWER THE RISK OF SERIOUS INJURY

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The Polish Summer of 1980

In a time of crisis, Poland's small, uncensored papers played a heroic role

by TADEUSZ WALENDOWSKI

On July 1, people in different parts of Poland were stunned to see that the price of meat had risen by as much as 75 percent. No official communiqués or newspaper accounts had prepared them for this drastic change. On the same day, several thousands of workers at

Tadeusz Walendowski was an editor of the underground literary quarterly Puls (Pulse) before he emigrated to the United States last year. He is the founder of the Poland Watch Center, which keeps track of developments in the opposition movement in Poland.

the Ursus Mechanical Works, about ten miles from Warsaw, went on strike, demanding compensation for higher food prices. Neither the strike nor the workers' demands were reported by the state-controlled media. The ensuing wave of labor unrest that eventually threatened to become a nationwide general strike received no mention in the official Polish press until August 14.

From the point of view of information flow, the Polish Summer of 1980 is a fascinating case history of a successful effort to break a totalitarian state's monopoly on news. It is,



Sygma

Getting the word: Accurate information about the spreading strikes was fed by opposition journalists to Western broadcasters, who recycled the news back into Poland

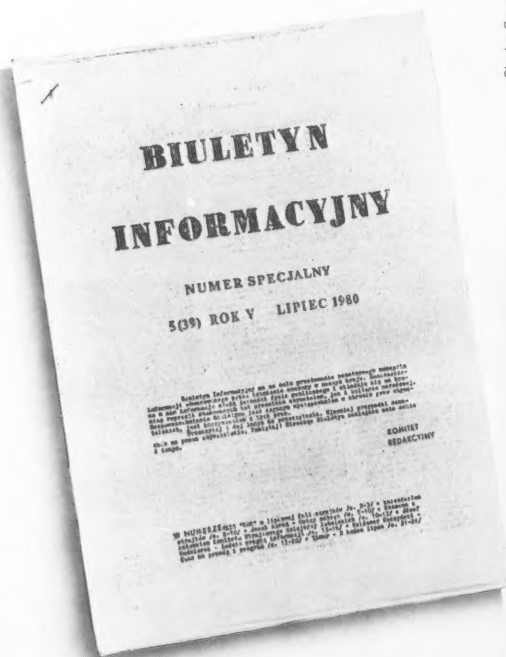
perhaps, too much to say that the workers' movement in Poland could not have succeeded without the country's flourishing opposition press, but that press clearly played a crucial role in knitting the movement together, rallying and informing local strike committees about what was going on, and collecting accurate information which, supplied to foreign correspondents and picked up by Western European broadcasters, was instantly fed back to Poland.

That press was not quickly improvised but was solidly established when the strikes (or "stoppages" in official press parlance, since "strike" is used only to describe the proletariat's struggles with the bourgeoisie) began last summer. The opposition movement that gave rise to this alternative press took shape in 1976, another year of severe labor unrest. Then, too, the immediate cause was a drastic rise in the price of meat. In June 1976, the price rise triggered widespread strikes and riots, which forced the prices back down. In the meantime, however, hundreds of workers and protesters had been arrested. Some were sentenced to as much as ten years in prison. In September 1976, a group of young activists and prominent public figures holding a variety of political views formed the Workers' Defense Committee, or KOR. KOR provided financial and legal aid to victimized workers and their families, and started publishing *Komunikat* (Communiqué), a monthly that reported new arrests and trials and described the committee's activities on behalf of the imprisoned workers. At about the same

time, other KOR associates started bringing out *Biuletyn Informacyjny* (Information Bulletin). Also a monthly, it laid great stress on presenting facts, documents, and eyewitness accounts of various acts of repression, shunning editorial comment.

It was with the appearance of *Opinia* (Opinion) in March 1977 that Polish underground journalism began to address a wider public. *Opinia* was the publishing arm of a new opposition group called *Ruch Obrony Praw Człowieka i Obywatela* (Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights), or ROPCIO. Its editor-in-chief was a talented professional journalist, Leszek Moczulski. Moczulski and his staff wanted *Opinia* to be a newspaper, not a dispassionate document, so they opened their pages to a wider range of civil-rights stories and ran outspoken comment pieces. These differences, together with the paper's nationalistic and anti-Soviet flavor, gave *Opinia* a popular appeal which the stolid *Biuletyn* lacked. In line with the opposition movement's belief in complete openness, *Opinia* from the start published not only the names and addresses of its editors, but those of its contributors, as well. Following this lead, in June 1977 *Biuletyn Informacyjny* for the first time carried the names of three people signing "in the name of the editorial board."

This was a bold move, for the struggle between the government and the opposition movement was just then coming to a climax. The opposition, including members of the



Charles Sawyer



The new journalism: First brought out in 1976, the *Information Bulletin* was one of several opposition papers put out by activists associated with the Workers' Defense Committee. Few of the editors had had previous experience in journalism. Most, like Sewenjn Blumsztajn (right), a *Bulletin* editor, were young

church hierarchy, was clamoring for the release of still-imprisoned workers; the government was cracking down on protesters. (In one sweep, fifteen KOR members and associates were arrested, among them three founding members of the *Biuletyn*.) It was the government, however, that finally gave in: in July 1977 it declared an amnesty and released all the workers and protesters who had been jailed. KOR had proved that solidarity, determination, and open, direct communication were the most effective means of defending society against its rulers.

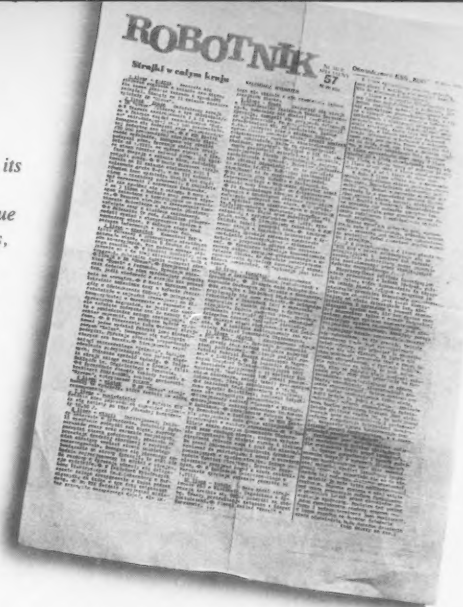
Autumn 1977 was a time of the "Free Word Rush" in Poland, with new underground publications springing up almost every week. (A then-current joke was that there would be more underground papers than dissidents by 1980. Actually, the number of publications soon stabilized at about twenty.) One of these in particular played an important role in preparing workers for their successful struggle with the government in the summer of 1980. Started by KOR associates in September 1977, *Robotnik* (Worker) defined its goal as helping workers to defend their interests through building solidarity, to increase their participation in decisions related to wages and working conditions, and to replace the dead official labor union structure with one that would truly represent the workers. This was not a case of ideologues coming up with ready answers; *Robotnik's* aim was, rather, to stimulate dialogue between workers and editors, and between workers and a readership that included clergy, students, intellectuals — and workers.

The majority of the editors of these papers were young — between twenty-five and thirty-five. Most had attended one or another of Poland's dozen universities. But few had had any previous experience or training in journalism. And while some of their older contributors had previously written for official publications, many of the younger ones had not. For them, the uncensored opposition press was their first contact with journalism.

Westerners may well wonder how such publications could exist, even thrive, in a communist state. The answer lies in the Catch-22 nature of Polish law. The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and of the press — a dangerous bit of lip service for which the government has provided a remedy: all printing equipment must be registered and nothing may be printed without government approval. (Even wedding announcements and movie tickets must be approved by the censor.) Meanwhile, the government can also hold down the circulation of an officially tolerated (and censored) paper like the Catholic *Tygodnik Powszechny*, or Universal Weekly, to 40,000 by allotting it a set supply of newsprint.

Nominally free to express themselves, but denied the use of printing presses, the dissident journalists first resorted to typewriters and carbon paper. In many cases, it took about a year to obtain simple mimeograph equipment, to improvise inks, and to organize a system of storing and distributing paper that would escape the notice of the secret police. *Robotnik* turned to screen-printing, finding it cheap and simple and the equipment easy to transport and conceal. Copy was transferred by photographic techniques to silk

Forging links:
Robotnik, or Worker, was started in 1977; its goal was to stimulate dialogue between workers, editors, and a readership that included clergy and students



cloth stretched on a wooden frame. Using such a device, one person could handprint 500 copies an hour. This invention, born of necessity, allowed the two-to-four-page *Robotnik* to become the only biweekly among the opposition periodicals; it also allowed *Robotnik* to achieve rather quickly a circulation of about 15,000 — a number it could double during a crisis, as it did last summer.

The very fact that such periodicals, short in supply but much in demand, were passed from hand to hand helped to strengthen the links between people in the various cities in which they were published. Those links proved astonishingly effective in the Polish Summer of 1980.

From the first day of this year's crisis, the government tried to "contain" the situation by saying nothing about it. No reports on the strike at the Ursus Mechanical Works appeared in the official newspapers or were heard on Polish radio or television. Yet, very swiftly, almost everyone learned of them. The network built during the last four years enabled KOR members and sympathizers to gather and double-check information about strikes as they occurred first in one city, then the next. (KOR's concern for accuracy is attested to by the fact that information which its spokesmen supplied to Western correspondents was never challenged by Polish officials.) Western news agency reports on strikes, broadcast back to Poland by Radio Free Europe, Voice of America, *Deutsche Welle*, and the BBC, provided Poles with current information day after day. By devoting time and attention to opposition activities and publications, Radio Free Europe in particular made it possible for millions to learn what was being printed in papers that otherwise reached only thousands.

One gains some sense of how information was recycled from following the progress of a single statement issued by KOR on July 2. It read, in part:

[KOR] fully supports the strikers and their demands . . . in particular [their demand] for cost of living increases. The most effective and the safest way for workers . . . is to organize themselves and democratically elect independent workers' representatives to



The power of the improvised press: Striking workers at the Gdansk shipyard reach out for leaflets that inform them of the latest developments in the negotiations with Party officials. Denied the use of newspaper presses, activists cranked out their bulletins and monthlies on improvised equipment like the hand press shown at right



Sygma

negotiate with the authorities in a responsible but firm manner. Above all, any reprisals against strikers and their leaders must be prevented. Workers must realize that only solidarity can bring success.

Circulated in Poland, the statement was read over Radio Free Europe on July 3, then published in the July 12 *Robotnik*, together with an eyewitness report on the Ursus strike. A subsequent issue provided information about the fourteen strikes that had started since July 1, an analysis of the causes that had led to the crisis, and a list of conditions that would have to be met to prevent the crisis from becoming a national catastrophe:

It is vital that future discussions . . . be carried out peacefully. . . . The right to strike should be legally guaranteed. . . . The views of employees and independent organizations should be published and persecution of independent publications should cease. . . . Independence of the judiciary should be restored and political prisoners released at once

KOR appealed to "the whole nation" to support these postulates, and in particular appealed "to the workers who will be able to present them during the coming negotiations with the authorities."

These postulates, in turn, were broadcast from the West. A month later, they were included in the list of twenty-one strikers' demands that was nailed to a bulletin board at the Gdansk shipyard.

Despite unusually close police scrutiny, the *Robotnik* staff managed to get out two issues in July and to publish as well a one-page information sheet titled "How to Strike." In several cities, striking workers sought out editors, asking for advice and assistance.

The turning point of the Polish Summer of 1980 came on August 14, when the Gdansk shipyard workers struck. Here, for the first time, strikers made political demands. The strike then spread to about 500 other factories in the so-called tri-city area of Gdansk, Gdynia, and Sopot. And on the 14th, finally, the Polish government began to admit publicly that something was actually happening. The Polish Press Agency (PAP) announced that "work stoppages have occurred in some firms and factories in relation to demands for higher pay and . . . demands concerning work norms, organization, and consumer goods." The following day, both national-circulation dailies, *Trybuna Ludu* (People's Tribune) and *Zycie Warszawy* (Warsaw Life), published commentaries on the "stoppages," emphasizing that all issues could be discussed, but that work "could not be interrupted."

Over the weekend of August 16-17, the Gdansk authorities, with the active cooperation of the local news media, tried to break the strike by putting out a false report that strikers and management had reached an agreement. The ruse failed, in part because by then no one believed either the government or the official media, in part because accurate information was being circulated by the opposition and being broadcast from the West.

In an attempt to cut the communications network linking Gdansk with Warsaw and the rest of the country, the police

Solidarity: On August 23, the Gdansk strikers started up their own paper, in part to counter government efforts to discredit their motives for striking



arrested several KOR members in the capital. One KOR report named seven of those arrested and went on: "Telephones of Warsaw KOR members were disconnected, particularly those whose names were listed in *Robotnik* as gathering information on strikes. Telephone conversations were interrupted. It was impossible to communicate with these people. . . . My notes were confiscated in [KOR spokesman Jacek] Kuron's apartment."

But still the links held and the information circulated. And new publications appeared. On August 23, the Gdansk Interfactory Strike Committee began publishing *Strajkowy Biuletyn Informacyjny — Solidarność* (Strike Information Bulletin — Solidarity). The first issue included, among much other news, a letter sent from the Communist Party's Central Committee to Party members claiming that "antisocialist elements" had penetrated the strike committees. "We are publishing, without comment, important fragments of the letter," *Solidarność* explained, "because it displays such terrifying political blindness." Interestingly, the Party leadership did not dare to publish or broadcast its slur on the strikers. It is also interesting to note that, at this point, leaks were developing in high places. On August 25, *Solidarność* was able to publish another important document it had obtained — a memorandum from the local Gdansk Party Committee to the Central Committee calling on Party leaders to start negotiating with the Interfactory Strike Committee. By then, a group of experts — in law, political science, economy, and social policy — had arrived in Gdansk to help the strikers during the final round of negotiations. On August 31, with the government's signing of an accord which, among other things, permitted the establishment of independent unions and included a curb on censorship, the Polish Summer of 1980 came to an end.

Perhaps never before had journalism played such an important part in effecting change. Not only had the opposition press managed to break the information blockade imposed by the government. It had also, and more importantly, assisted in the political education of both workers and intellectuals, teaching them what to expect and to hope for, and how to achieve it.

Hodding Carter tells

A seasoned newsman reflects on what he learned about his profession during his years at the State Department

As spokesman for the State Department during the first half year of the Iranian hostage crisis, Hodding Carter III became as much a regular on the nightly news as Chancellor or Cronkite. Although celebrity was a new experience, long before he went to work for the government in 1977 he was widely known and respected in the news business. First with his father, and later, after his father's death, by himself, he ran the Delta Democrat-Times in Greenville, Mississippi—a newspaper greatly admired both for its perseverance in calling for racial justice in the face of boycotts and ostracism, and for the excellence of its reporting and writing. Last July, Carter left the State Department—he is teaching at American University and writing a biography of his father—and soon afterward Nicholas Von Hoffman, author, columnist, and a friend of Carter's for almost twenty years, talked with him about his years in government, and what they had taught him about journalism. What follows is an abridged transcript of that conversation.

Hodding, what's your assessment of the journalists who covered the State Department?

The men and women that I dealt with at State were, for the most part, very well informed about their subject, very serious about it; they understood the depth and the background and the perspective. They worked hard and yet these very excellent, first-class reporters produced a totally confusing picture of what was going on in the world. It wasn't that they didn't understand what happened, but that you cannot do one of those stories in a ninety-second spot. You can't get across any reality in a news cycle that has to top itself twice a day in ways which are just phony. Beyond that, there's always too much demand out of the home offices of newspapers, let alone of television and the wires, to match what some other correspondent has written.

Or top it?

Or top it, when in fact that happens to be a completely wrong lead, and the poor correspondent goes back to his office and says, "Hey, come on, there's nothing there," and back comes the order, "If so-and-so has it, there's something there. Get it."

Are you saying that these people are really captives of their offices?

I think to a large extent most are. Some of the guys I most liked, let alone most respected, would have an attitude of "I

put the material in there, I can't help it if" — you name the anchor man — "chooses to ignore it." . . . Television is lightning-flash journalism; it can't help but be disturbing, even at its best. It's sharp-impact illumination, a lot of shadows and nothing beyond what lightning illuminates for the second. . . . Which brings you to the real problem: the snapshot-of-the-moving-train syndrome. It doesn't matter where the train comes from, it doesn't matter where the train's going, it doesn't matter what the point of the journey is. If you do a good job of saying what's happening right then, and throw it at the folk, that's doing the job of any good newsman — pardon me, of any good news organization. You keep throwing those damn pictures at everybody and I'm surprised anybody understands anything.

How does a person working for a news organization reconcile the institutional realities you've been describing with the ethical ideals of journalism?

I think real technical competence becomes the justification — "I did a damn good job with that story, whether it was a major story or a trivial one. I gave it real flair, a real push." That helps a lot, the notion that "this may be dreck but I made it smell better than anyone else could have done."

How do you feel now about the leaking of news stories, and about reporters who are chosen to be the funnels for leaks?

In every administration there is always the misapprehension that the bulk of the stories they don't like is the result of one person calling up and handing over a story to some reporter. Now, God knows, there are leaks like that. I mean, as a leaker myself I know that's so. On the other hand, I know how many stories get out because the guy catches you out on one sentence and then goes to Charley and says, "Hey, Charley, I understand that . . ." and Charley says, "Oh, Jesus!" And then the reporter takes the "Oh, Jesus," and the one sentence and goes to the third guy and says, "It's really too bad about what they're doing over there," and the guy says, "How do you know about that?" Then there's a special kind of leak that you want to call *The New York Times* leak. Somebody in government wants a story to get authoritative play, wants it to run a certain kind of way.

Isn't *The New York Times* the *Izvestia* or the *L'Osservatore Romano* of America? The semi-official organ?

It has certainly come to be so viewed, and the *Times* is therefore invaluable to any administration — and that view is invaluable to the *Times*. It's a great circular business.

Doesn't government need some publication like that?

Maybe. I suppose in some ways it makes life easier for everybody who's trying to figure out what is what. What's interesting about the situation in the last ten or fifteen years is that you can't really tell every time whether you are really getting [an authoritative] view or whether you're getting the

(almost) all

view of the faction that is not quite hacking it. It's become very confusing for the foreign observers. . . .

It's juvenile of me to say it, but it would be useful all the way around to give the reader some sense of whence the story comes. And some reporters do this. They'll say, "Coming from a source ordinarily opposed to any SALT ratification. . . ." Or, "Coming from a source closely identified with. . . ." That is a broad enough category so that it still leaves it impossible for any investigative arm I know anything about to find the leaker, but gives you some sense of whose hand is actually guiding the keyboard.

Overall, does use of unnamed sources help or hurt?

I would say, overall, that a good reporter can find information from such sources invaluable, and therefore can be of better use to the public he ostensibly serves than if he sticks to information from official sources, since official sources are like official anything — largely self-serving. You've got to have some kind of diversity of information and competing ideas coming out of this mess, and you're not going to get it on the record. However, there are too damn many reporters riding somebody else's horse in town.

I don't know what you mean by that.

I mean too many guys who are just simply the open mouth through which other people's voices are heard. They are scribes and they are scribes for a particular viewpoint. Now, frankly, an editor ought to fire them, or a vice president of news ought to get rid of them, but they don't. Often it's because they're extremely sexy on the air, or because they're good writers, or because it's nice to have that information. But they are, finally, whores.

In the sense of being a pipeline without thinking?

They're getting paid for their talents by two different people. That's a whore. They are operating as though they were independent voices of whatever institution they represent — this paper or that broadcasting unit — when they are, in fact, a representative of the Department of State, of Defense, of somebody in government. I don't think any reporter ought to accept anything from anybody unquestioningly. One of the things I like about Bernie Gwertzman at the *Times* is that he tries to perform the function of a *Times* reporter, which is to try to get it all out. But he's always saying things like, "Yeah, but wait a minute, you guys went around this road before, and, uh, that sounds like the same old stuff."

What do you do if you're the independent reporter like Gwertzman using your critical faculties, and you're up against a scribe/mouthpiece-type reporter, and your desk starts complaining, How come you don't have this stuff when he does? What do you do?

You keep at it because, if you keep at it, those who are interested in having the questions asked will start coming to you with information and soon you become a force [that



WIDE WORLD

people in government] have got to reckon with somehow or other, and so they begin to think, "We're going to have to start using the sugar instead of the spice." But it really does involve the nerve of the home office more than of the reporter. You back the guy until such time as you have reason to believe he's really incompetent, then you sack him. [As an editor] you've got to decide that that's your horse and ride it.

As the person who handled the press through much of that unique diplomatic impasse called the Iranian hostage crisis, what would you say in retrospect?

I'm about talked out and thought out about that one for a while. It was cops and robbers to some degree; it was set-piece journalism. It was, of course, . . . totally unavoidable in terms of massive coverage. It was ready-made for it and it came at a time in history when we were feeling particularly sensitive about being kicked around by little wretches, having just been kicked out of Vietnam. . . . Some day somebody's going to do a piece on how much of policy and coverage was actually based on any kind of understanding of the dynamics at play in Iran. I'm talking about the critics as well as the policymakers and all forms of press. The basic underlying realities of what was going on in Iran were ignored.

My impression was that not many people handling that story had heard of Crane Brinton's *The Anatomy of Revolution*, much less read it.

Yes. . . . We were always operating from just one perspective. It doesn't mean that plenty of voices weren't heard; it was just that they were essentially ignored. I'm going to hold off on this, though, because it is a game of kiss-and-tell which comes badly from one who was one of the major players who screwed it up.

You think you screwed it up?

Yes, just in the sense that we all did. I have a feeling that, when all was said and done, the smartest thing would have been, whatever the political cost, to have just shut up. Just shut it down. ■

Was Randy Mantooth

Or, burning out at the Hot Line desk

I. The Randy Mantooth lady

In a small town near Bloomington, Indiana, there was a woman who wanted to know about Randy Mantooth, the star of the TV series *Emergency*. She used to write to me at the Bloomington *Herald-Telephone*, where I worked as the editor of the Hot Line column. Her letters were handwritten and never more than a page long.

I would like to name my thoroughbred colt after a TV Star and used his full Real Name Randolph Mantooth and do I have to get his permission for this and would he get a percentage for this How much?

But if I win on a horse a Name the colt after him what would happen if I if not get permission for this. could you get a picture of his house. and some day will Randy be come to Bloomington, Ind. and would you put this in the newspaper about this?
Thank you.

I would like to get this information on Randy Mantooth. What is his girlfriend full Real Name. I hear they are in engage. are they get married now or not? And is it true that he used to date Linda evans. Now his girlfriend, how tall is she and how old to? Where are they plan on get Married or they want go live together?
Thank you.

1. Was [Randy Mantooth] ever in the service if not how did he Manage to stay out of the service?
 2. How many acres does he own or Rent in Topanga canyon?
 3. What kind of home does he own or rent, a cabin, mobile home. How big is it, How many Room does it have?
 4. has he every posed nude be for & for who what the name of the Magazine, what yrs was it?
 5. Does any of his fans ever send litter to his home?
- Thank you.

There was a phone number for Hot Line and several times she called me. Once she told me about a trip she was planning. She was going to Hollywood. Could I give her Randy Mantooth's address? I explained that all I could do was give her the address of the production company that created *Emergency*, which I did in my column. This wasn't enough. Her letters continued to pour into Hot Line.

Can Hot Line help me out on this. I would like to get some information on actor Randy Mantooth. Where he work as a pipeline worker. did he ever live in Indiana. what was the name? has he ever been married, how long did it last and what kind of outdoor spectator sports does he like? What kind of a car does he have? Now who is Randy engage to any way? That one thing I like to no. Thank you.

The last time she called me she asked me about CB radios. How far could a person broadcast on a CB radio? From Indiana to California? Did Randy Mantooth have a CB radio? If so, what was his handle?

Rich Stim is a free-lance writer and a member of MX-80 Sound, a San Francisco rock group.

Again, I explained my limitations to her. I was a twenty-five-year-old writer working for a small newspaper. I had no direct contact with TV stars.

There was a pause. Then she asked me if anyone else at Hot Line could help her. I said no. This was my last contact with the Randy Mantooth Lady.

II. Learning the ropes

I got my job at the *Herald-Telephone* one hot day in the autumn of 1973 after meetings with the personnel manager and the city editor. I had an A.B. in sociology from Indiana University (also located in Bloomington), but my only journalism experience had been two summers of feature writing at *Newsday*, the Long Island daily. The last person to have the desk, I was told, was a former English teacher, who had walked out one day and never returned.

The desk — my desk — was old and brown and furnished with a bottle of glue, a phone, a metal spike, a dented in-out basket, and a battered Underwood Standard.

My early years at the *H-T* (as the paper was known in town) were fun. The staff rejoiced at the demise of their only competitor, the *Courier-Tribune*. Management rejoiced when circulation passed the 22,000 mark. The younger reporters, most of them graduates of the Ernie Pyle School of Journalism at IU, were filled with ambition. Many of the older staff members seemed straight out of an old-fashioned newspaper movie — the editor who wore short-sleeved shirts, smoked cigars, and answered the phone by barking, "Yell-lo"; the sportswriters who sat with their feet on their desks, lobbing wads of paper into waste-paper baskets. In the photo lab hung pictures taken by bored sports photographers who had aimed their cameras up the skirts of leaping cheerleaders.

As described in the *H-T*, Hot Line was "an arm of [the paper's] readers." Its function was to "provide quick answers to many of the day-to-day questions and problems raised by dealings with government or business." During my first weeks on the job, I discovered that there were five general types of questions; they involved complaints from dissatisfied mail-order customers, government/bureaucracy complaints, business/consumer problems, celebrities (Randy Mantooth was only the first of a long series), and general information.

On my first day at work, I learned that I was expected to clean up the grammar of all questions we used — and to elevate their tone. For example, when a woman asked whether the Equal Rights Amendment would allow men and women to use the same toilets, her question became:

QUESTION — *Could you provide a detailed explanation of the Equal Rights Amendment? I have heard that there are some horrible things in it.*

ever in the service?

by RICH STIM

Hot Line's reply did not mention toilets.

I was also instructed never to name local businesses in items related to consumer complaints. (Out-of-town firms could be named.) The first time I called a local firm about a complaint, the company's owner got on the phone. He didn't want the paper to publish the complaint. But, look, I explained, your firm's name won't even be mentioned. That made no difference. If we published the complaint, he said, he would pull his advertising. The paper ran the item.

A few weeks later, I got another complaint involving this company. I called the firm. This time the owner asked me three questions: How long had I lived in Bloomington? Did I own my home? How much did I make? I told him that I had lived in Bloomington for eight years, that I owned a small home, and that I earned less than \$100 a week. What was the value of my home? he asked. Nine thousand dollars, I said. He had lived in Bloomington all his life, he replied; he owned a lot of property, and he made a lot more money than I did. He would be in Bloomington ten years from that day, but he doubted that I would. So what right did I, an outsider, have to publicize problems involving his company? I put him on to the editor.

That afternoon the editor said we would follow a different policy when dealing with this company. I would send the company a copy of the written complaints; the company would respond by letter — and the whole affair need never appear in the paper, so long as the matter was settled.

III. An answer for every question?

At Hot Line there was supposed to be an answer for every question. That was its format, its image. But the nature of many questions made it hard for me to respond. For this reason, a lot of them went unanswered.

Where was the brutal slaying of three people committed by a man who after viewing Helter Skelter thought it was a good idea to kill the rich? I understand that this book is used in the local schools. I. P. (Interested Person)

Thanks. Happy and Joyous Christmas.

When I was in grade school we sang a song called "The Watermelon Song." I can remember parts of it but not all. The Chorus went like this, "Oh, de ham bone Am Sweet

And de bacon Am good

And de 'possum fat and very, very fine"

Can Hot Line tell me where I can find the copy of the song?

Do you have the Address of CONVICTED MANSON follower "SQUEAKY" fromme? Interesting to know her thoughts NOW. Thank you.

Yes Can you help me I've been buying Pall Mall Extra Mild with a filter. Every once in while I buy Extra Mild's and they are a plain filter you can't even puff on them what in the world are wrong with them is the company getting til they can't even punch holes anymore. gosh they are nothing duds. Please find out the story.

In 1976 I joined a rock band. One day, in order to get out of work early for practice, I made up two Hot Line questions. I found two facts in *The World Almanac*, turned them into questions, and submitted them with my column. They were accepted and printed.

Soon I was making up one or two questions for each column, keeping them similar to the ones submitted by readers.

QUESTION — *Where is the statue of 'Christ in the Ozarks'?*

QUESTION — *How would we go about trying to find some strange information? We need to know the size of the nose on the Statue of Liberty. I know this sounds very strange, but it has turned into a topic of interest where I work, and some of the people have even gotten together a pool. Where can we write to get the dimensions of the Statue?*

QUESTION — *I don't mean to be morbid, but what kind of guns were used in the Gary Gilmore execution?*

QUESTION — *We have heard about research on low-cholesterol eggs. Is this true? Are there really such eggs?*

At the end of each year, the editor selected a "best of the Hot Line" column. The majority of the questions selected in 1976 were ones I had created. Also that year Hot Line was selected in the readership poll as the most popular in-house feature.

IV. Seeping fears — and aggressive birds

In 1976, massive PCB pollution was discovered in Bloomington and several surrounding areas. Polychlorinated biphenyls had been dumped into the city's disposal system. The sludge was used on local farmlands as fertilizer. PCBs were found in milk, in the water, in fish, in local vegetables. How could they be removed? (They couldn't, I wrote.) Why was there no advance warning from the State Board of Health? (I couldn't answer that one.) Why didn't the newspaper pursue the story? (The story was "discovered" by the paper's outdoor editor, who traced the PCBs to the local Westinghouse plant. The paper's refusal to carry out a thorough investigation angered many of the young reporters, particularly the outdoor editor, who finally quit, after knocking everything off the editor's desk.)

Meanwhile, each day, it seemed, another product was found to be dangerous — food dyes, saccharin, nitrates, and nitrites. People were worried. They turned to Hot Line.

Can Hot Line tell what food co's are putting in about everything in the products of too day?

I have tried 3 Brands of coffee the leading Brands. they all have It In them, tastes and smells like fish Oil Or Soyu Oil real strong with It.

Some In Bread. In Butter. pea Nut Butter. Chicken Turkey.

Our Holiday Turkey is strong with It. the Eggs are real strong with It. the Producers are feeding the Chickens some of this In the feed Its showing up in the Eggs. We had to quit using Eggs and

Poultry on account of this taste and smell. In them.

It will come out of your system through perspiration real strong you can take Instant Coffee Crystals say four or five dampen them together and It will turn your fingers Cherry Red and stick them together like glue so too speak.

I ask my Grocerman at Kirksville about it he didn't no. But noticed some of it too. Thank you very much.

I cleaned this up, cut it down, and advised the writer to contact Hot Line when she could provide more specifics.

One day I received a call from a lady who reported there were aggressive birds in her backyard. They had pecked at her daughter's foot. They walked around, she said, "as if they couldn't fly." "Perhaps," the woman speculated, "they had gotten hold of some marijuana seeds or something on that order."

The birds had been in her yard for three days. They were sparrow-like, and there was "a whole mess of 'em." She wondered if somebody, "a professor or a graduate student or a law officer," might be willing to investigate.

A friend at the paper said that sometimes birds fly through poisonous fumes and the fumes can cause brain damage. I called the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Division; they sent an agent to investigate. He reported to me that complaints about attacking birds were "uncommon but they do occur periodically."

V. Breaking away

In 1978 people from Hollywood came to southern Indiana to film *Breaking Away*. It was a movie about young men growing up in Bloomington in the 1970s, but the Bloomington it showed was a 1950s version. The filming was done in the older, prettier parts of town. The bucolic quarries in which the boys swim in *Breaking Away* had to be sandblasted to remove the graffiti. The friendly town-gown rivalry portrayed in the movie had long since vanished.

The growing feeling of frustration among older residents was summed up by a letter to Hot Line that began, "How much of noise, Trouble, trash, dogs, do the people who live in this town suppose to take from IU students, who live in neighborhoods where people are too old to fight these people and are told to move if you don't like the noise?" (Hot Line supplied a phone number to call about noise problems.) An older woman, tired of chasing students' dogs off her lawn, asked, "Do I have the right to kill an animal that ruins my home?" (Hot Line discovered that she did — if she used a bow and arrow and killed the animal, on her own property, with the first shot — but advised her to call the Animal Shelter.) A resident complained bitterly about a VD clinic near a house she wanted to purchase. Her letter ended, "I want to live in Bloomington, but if I can't be sure of the type of neighborhood that I'm getting into, I'll just stay down on the farm."

By 1978, the newspaper, too, had undergone changes. VDT terminals were used for editing; IBM Selectrics typed special-format copy that was fed into a scanning device. Carpet-like room dividers created a pseudo-modular appearance for the city room. The editor smoked a pipe now. And I had gotten married.

Domestic questions began to appear in Hot Line.

QUESTION — *If I add a wood stove to my home, do I have to report it to my insurance agent?*

And questions reflecting my personal interests.

QUESTION — *I am a local person interested in the arts and was told that one of the departments at IU has original manuscripts by Charles Bukowski and Gregory Corso, two well-known poets of the "Beat" Period. . . . I would like to find out where they are located and what the procedure is.*

Getting my own questions into the column became an obsession. I saw myself as a researcher in the boundaries of credibility, a new New Journalist who presented fiction in a factual manner. Unable to name local businesses, I invented — and named — out-of-state businesses, complete with fictitious customer representatives.

QUESTION — *Where is the hand-carved salt and pepper shaker that I ordered from Eton Mills in Boston, Massachusetts? I ordered them eight weeks ago and have received my cancelled check. Can Hot Line help?*

ANSWER — *Jim Brill, customer representative at Eton Mills, explained that there was a delay in receiving the salt and pepper shakers from the factory. They are on their way and you should receive them within four weeks.*

In my last year on the paper, often more than half of the questions were created by me. The only challenge left in my job was to see how far I could go and still get away with it. For a week when my wife was sick I used the column as a get-well card, answering all sorts of questions relating to music, recipes, and books she was interested in. I began repeating old columns, from 1973 and 1974, changing only a few details. ("Whatever happened to the 'low-cholesterol' egg? A few years ago there was a lot of talk. . . .") Nobody on the staff seemed to notice, nor did any of my 22,000 readers. The drive toward pure fiction found expression in my occasional "Record Review" column; I reviewed albums that didn't exist. Again, nobody noticed.

Meanwhile, out in the real world, there seemed to be an increasing number of unsettling occurrences — unsolved murders, unexpected violence, the appearance of peculiar characters like the Inspector, who called the newspaper and claimed credit for acts of vandalism. The victims, he said, had failed his "inspection." One day the Inspector chopped off the head of the newsboy statue in front of the *Herald-Telephone* building. The decapitated newsie holding his stone newspaper greeted visitors to the paper for several weeks, until someone in management had the statue removed.

My work at Hot Line had become as surreal as the headless newsboy. My wife suggested it was time to move on.

In the spring of 1978, a lot of questions began appearing in the Hot Line column about how to sell a home, how to locate an airline box for transporting a pet, how to transfer bank accounts, how to clean and ship rugs.

One day in June 1978, I cleaned out my desk and, like my Hot Line predecessor, walked out of the building and never came back. After five years on the job, for me there was only one answer to Bloomington: San Francisco. ■

THE GENE CRAZE

Now that gene splicing is a growth industry, the once-skeptical press is pushing the product. How come?

by RAE GOODELL

Genetic engineering has been full of surprises. In a truth-is-stranger-than-fiction twist, the imaginings of science fiction writers have been surpassed by revolutionary developments in molecular biology promising to alter the stuff of life and thereby to combat cancer, the energy crisis, pollution, mass starvation. One of the most startling transformations in genetic engineering has occurred not in the laboratory, however, but in the news media: a press that spent much of the 1970s dwelling at length on the drawbacks of genetic research now heralds its breakthroughs and benefits almost as if the 1970s had never happened.

Genetic engineering has become a media celebration, a rags-to-riches story of the burgeoning biotechnology industry, capitalizing on the titillating theme of the merger of "life" and big business. Bacteria, engineered like industrial machinery to produce drugs and chemicals — "bacteriofacture," "living factories" — can make the stock market go up and down. In flashy features, *The New York Times* calls the phenomenon the INDUSTRY OF LIFE and the GENE MACHINE; *Omni* writes of the "The Gene Trust"; *Life*, of the "Miraculous Prospects of Gene Splicing"; *Newsweek*, of "The Miracles of Spliced Genes"; *Science Digest* (special edition), of "New Life for Sale."

Based on potential rather than actual products, the fledgling genetic industry has needed carefully timed and orchestrated promotion, and the press has provided it. Hardly a week goes by without an enthusiastic announcement in the daily press of a new discovery, new company, new contract, new application, as the industry moves closer to its goal. That goal is to manipulate bacteria, primarily by means of recombinant DNA, or gene-splicing, technologies, so as to produce useful quantities of valuable drugs and chemicals — human insulin, interferon (the big IF drug that may combat virus diseases and cancer), artificial sweetener, ingredients for gasohol and antifreeze, more efficient bread yeast. The upbeat publicity has helped encourage an inpouring of venture capital and a network of research contracts with major pharmaceutical and chemical firms, creating a story in itself. All told, the paper value of the four best known genetics firms — Cetus, Genentech, Genex, and Biogen — doubled in the first half of 1980 to more than \$500 million, according to a *New York Times* financial feature on June 29, 1980, which borrowed calcu-

lations without acknowledgement from an article by Nicholas Wade in the May 16, 1980, issue of *Science* magazine. Yet, as Wade noted, these companies had yet to bring a single gene-spliced product to market.

Questions of risk and regulation have become parenthetical past history, as in *Omni* in March: "Not long ago experiments with recombinant DNA stirred visions of strange, artificial diseases against which humanity would have no natural defense; such experiments provoked sharp controversy over whether scientists should be allowed to tamper with life itself. Today most of the fears have died down, and biotechnology is filling the heads of businessmen with visions of immense profits." End of subject.

When concerns about the new technology threatened to resurface after the Supreme Court ruled in June that the altered bacteria could be patented, the press stepped in with reassuring quotes from industrial spokesmen and DNA researchers. On July 15, for example, after a group of religious leaders called for public control of the newly patentable technology, a *New York Times* article overwhelmed the clerics' statements with arguments from DNA leaders and quoted National Institutes of Health scientist Malcolm Martin as noting reassuringly, "The scientific community debated this years ago. Most of the critics have withdrawn their objections. . . . Nobody gives a hoot any more." The press further defused concerns about the patent decision by laughing them off with cartoons of clearly ridiculous monsters waiting patiently outside the U.S. Patent Office, and of friendly mutants labeled "Patent Pending."

Between hypothetical benefits and imaginary monsters, there seems to be no room in most recombinant DNA coverage for questions of occupational hazards, environmental impact, public regulation. Although by no means all reporters take this Pollyanna approach, the general effect is anachronistic, a throwback to the gee-whiz, science-saves 1960s before the press learned that technological advances have side effects. The nuclear industry may have its Three Mile Islands, and the chemical industry its Love Canals, but the genetics industry is somehow different, foolproof.

The balancing act

The press's first major encounter with the reality of genetic research was in 1974, when biologists announced that they were calling for a postponement of certain types of recombinant DNA experiments until their risks could be assessed. The experiments allowed scientists to transplant genetic material from other organisms into bacteria and induce the bac-

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teria to follow the foreign DNA's instructions. The technology was electrifying, promising medical panaceas and Nobel Prizes. But it also posed the possibility that the newly engineered bacteria might cause disease, upset the delicate ecological balance, and disrupt nature's evolutionary rules in unpredictable ways. And it brought closer the troubling ethical and political questions about tinkering with the genetics of human beings.

For years the national press conscientiously followed the issue from scientific conferences to university forums, to local communities, and finally to Congress. Its coverage was ritualistically balanced: risks vs. benefits, proponents vs. critics, cancer cures vs. Andromeda strains, public control vs. freedom of inquiry. *NEW STRAINS OF LIFE — OR DEATH* proclaimed *The New York Times Magazine* on August 22, 1976. "Creating New Forms of Life — Blessing or Curse?" wondered *U.S. News & World Report* eight months later. By 1977 the issue appeared so insoluble as to be destined for a permanent place in the press alongside older controversies about nuclear power, chemical dumps, disarmament, abortion.

Yet in 1978 genetic engineering as a political issue came to a quick and quiet end. After four years of heated debate, the news media largely dropped their coverage and Congress dropped its efforts at regulation.

What happened? How did a press that continually reminded the public of opposing points of view in the mid-1970s come to follow a single scientific-industrial viewpoint in 1980? That transformation, like those taking place in the laboratory, is not as miraculous as it seems. The weaknesses in the press that would allow such fluctuation in coverage were there from the beginning.

The press, no less than the public, often allows itself to be intimidated by science, reacting with awe, excitement, or resentment, but all too rarely with common sense. The press eases its discomfort by assigning science to specialized science writers, then leaving them pretty much alone. If a scientific issue gets big enough, as Three Mile Island did, editors tend to relegate the science reporters to sidebars and assign the main story to general or political reporters, as Edward Edelson, science editor of the *New York Daily News* and president of the National Association of Science Writers, lamented in a November 1979 NASW newsletter. Science writing, Edelson observed, is a "ghetto of journalism." The DNA issue, however, never got quite big enough, or quite political enough, to be taken away from science writers, and it had a tough technical core that required their expertise.

The inner club

Like all ghettos, science writing has developed its own cultural milieu — one with features that are advantageous to the press when it is reporting the events of science, but that may inhibit it from investigating the political implications of those events, as was the case in the DNA controversy. Research by Sharon Dunwoody, a journalism professor at Ohio State University, has shown that science writers, faced with a baffling array of complex scientific developments,

and pressured by unrealistic deadlines, tend to follow each other's leads, to share information, and to report the same stories with a relative lack of competitiveness. This is particularly true in what Dunwoody has described as an "inner club" of newspaper, magazine, and wire service reporters who form the leadership of the profession.

Furthermore, the science writers in turn depend on something of an inner club of reputable scientists as sources of ideas for stories, background information, and final arbitration of what is and is not good science. Enthusiastic about science and its practitioners, science writers inevitably tend to absorb its values, becoming allies rather than watchdogs of the institution they cover. Thus, for example, the professional science writers who found their way to the 1975 Asilomar conference, a landmark in the early days of the DNA safety debate, produced very fine, highly regarded accounts of the four-day international meeting, but most of their stories — an exception was Michael Rogers's report in *Rolling Stone* — were rather similar, and tended to assume that the resolution of the safety issue, in the process of being settled internally by DNA researchers themselves, was in good hands. Later, critics would suggest that, as well-intentioned as the DNA researchers might be, they could not effectively regulate themselves. It was wrong, the critics said, for the researchers to be deciding matters of public health without public involvement and without expert knowledge of occupational health, epidemiology, or laboratory safety procedures.

In general, the press waited until such concerns were expressed, first by Senator Edward Kennedy, then by a handful of scientist-critics, and ultimately by a chorus of observers. At that point reporters created an artificial balance, juxtaposing the views of outspoken proponents and opponents of the research. The same phenomenon occurs in nuclear power coverage, where the obligatory comment from Norman Rasmussen is customarily countered by criticism from Henry Kendall, both conveniently located at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Rarely represented in recombinant DNA coverage were scientists holding moderate positions between the polar extremes, or experts in related fields not in the spotlight. Such people had little incentive to volunteer their opinions, and the press usually did not seek them out. (An exception was a February 26, 1977, *Science News* article for which virologists were asked to comment on the laboratory safety procedures of their DNA-splicing colleagues.) Also rare were the interpretive pieces that would be expected from reporters covering a controversial issue: news analyses, for example, sorting out the strengths and weaknesses of the various positions in the cacophonous debate. (Exceptions were occasional pieces in *The New York Times* and Judith Randal's syndicated columns and her articles for *Change*.) In general, DNA was treated as a spectator sport, appropriate for public and press interest but not involvement. As Barbara Culliton remarked in *Science* on January 20, 1978, the public debate really amounted to "two scientific camps slugging it out in public."

With the press relying almost entirely on readily available scientist-experts, much besides moderation and interpretation was missing from typical recombinant DNA coverage. Scientist sources were inclined to narrow the issue to the question of immediate health risk, and press coverage was similarly restricted. (Again, there were exceptions: a rash of scholarly conferences in 1975 on ethical implications of gene engineering helped to stimulate an article by Albert Rosenfeld in *Saturday Review* on July 26, 1975, and one by Victor K. McElheny in *The New York Times* on December 15, 1975.) Sometimes scientists were not inclined to discuss the issue at all, and the press was similarly reticent. Journalism professor Charles Eisendrath, for example, has documented the dearth of local coverage of the University of Michigan's tumultuous decision in the spring of 1976 to allow certain types of recombinant DNA experiments on campus. Michigan reporters, according to Eisendrath, excused their lack of coverage on the ground that the university public information office had (understandably) not alerted them to developments and that there were no critics with proper credentials. By contrast, *The Boston Phoenix*, an alternative weekly, objected strenuously to the lack of public involvement in Harvard University's DNA decision-making. The paper's June 8, 1976, article has been credited with touching off events leading to extensive public debate and the enactment, by the city of Cambridge, Massachusetts (where MIT, as well as Harvard, is located), of an ordinance regulating recombinant DNA research.

Warning: lobby at work

Thus the balance in press coverage of gene-splicing was a fragile one, easily tipped when scientists were ready. And by mid-1977, the scientific community had had enough of public confusion and the threat of confining government regulation. In that year, at least sixteen bills were introduced in Congress to regulate DNA research, and twenty-five hearings and markup sessions were held, involving nearly 100 witnesses, according to a report in the winter 1978 *Recombinant DNA Technical Bulletin*. At the outset, the scientists seemed reconciled to the inevitability of legislation and the need to bring uniformity and enforcement to a patchwork of local regulations and voluntary guidelines. By the middle of the year, however, the cold reality of legislation — some of the bills were rather punitive and bureaucratic — galvanized scientific leaders and DNA researchers to put together an uncannily effective lobby. It was so effective, in fact, that, although the lobbyists' initial intent was to push for relatively lenient legislation, they ultimately headed off legislation altogether.

The lobbyists opposing legislation made a number of powerful points. For example, they argued that new evidence proved gene splicing to be much less hazardous than they had originally feared. In particular, the official summary of a conference at Falmouth, on Cape Cod, in June 1977 was quickly transmitted to key members of Congress, informing them that the strains of *E. coli* bacteria commonly used in DNA research were too weak to spread disease. And the results of an experiment led by Stanley Cohen at Stanford University School of Medicine were publicized



'I'm sorry — that's not exactly what the Supreme Court ruled on.'

months prior to publication. The experiment demonstrated, the lobbyists claimed, that what gene splicers were doing in the laboratory was occurring in nature all the time. The emphasis on new information from the laboratory was deliberately designed to make it easier for legislators to justify changing their minds, according to a January 20, 1978, report in *Science*, and the tactic worked. When Senator Kennedy withdrew support for his proposed legislation in September 1977, he pointed to the Cohen data and the "high emotions" among scientists opposed to the legislation. A leading DNA researcher and commentator, Roy Curtiss of the University of Alabama, would later call the scientists' treatment of Cohen's paper "one of the most imperious, despicable pieces of political science that I know of," and a number of respected scientists would point out weaknesses in the lobbyists' sweeping interpretations of both the Falmouth proceedings and Cohen's results.

The "new information" tactic was as effective in the press as in Congress. Articles began to appear pointing to the new scientific data as a major justification for a shift in federal policy. NO SCI-FI NIGHTMARE, AFTER ALL, proclaimed *The New York Times* on July 24, 1977, noting, among other things, that the Falmouth participants had concluded that "the danger of epidemic is largely nonexistent." (By contrast, *Boston Globe* science writer Robert Cooke, who had attended the Falmouth meeting, had reported on June 22, 1977, that the consensus of the group had been that more testing was needed.) Typically, the Cohen data were likewise accepted at face value. In report-

ing Kennedy's decision to back off on legislation, *The Washington Post* on September 28, 1977, quoted only Cohen's and Kennedy's versions of the experiment's significance. When Cohen's results were invoked again by National Institutes of Health director Donald Fredrickson at November 1977 Senate hearings, the Associated Press provided only Fredrickson's interpretation. By contrast, *Science News* on October 8, 1977, pointed out that the Cohen data had given Kennedy a "graceful retreat" but that some scientists found the results hardly definitive.

A second point stressed by the lobbyists was that the overwhelming majority of scientists had become persuaded that recombinant DNA research was safe, including the biologists who had originally called attention to the risks. The remaining doubters, the argument ran, lacked both numbers and credibility. Implicit in the argument was the assumption that the majority view in science is by definition right — a notion contradicted by numerous painful chapters in the history of science. (Only a little more than a generation ago, for example, the great majority of scientists refused to take seriously the possibility that it was DNA — not protein, as was generally believed — that carried genetic instructions.) There were disturbing indications, however, that criticism within the scientific community was not dying a natural death. *New Times*, *Time*, *Science*, and other publications carried articles in which established scientists labeled critics as mystics, incompetents, hysterics, and "shits." In a speech to the American Association for the Advancement of Science in February 1978, Representative Richard Ottinger, who had been following the issue closely as a member of the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, deplored what he called a "vilification" of critics reminiscent of the early days of the nuclear power debate. "At a comparable state early in the development of nuclear technology," he observed, "doubters were derided as over-cautious fools, and decisions were made which, in light of later developments, were clearly mistakes in judgment."

Unperturbed, the press passed along the good news that criticism was on the wane — ENTHUSIASM REPLACES RELUCTANCE IN GENE-TRANSPLANT RESEARCH announced *The Miami Herald* on May 1, 1977, in a Los Angeles Times Services story that did not quote a single critic. With scientist-critics increasingly reluctant to speak out, the press was, needless to say, in a difficult position. But it accepted all too easily the lobbyists' explanation for the critics' silence. Far from investigating charges of suppression, frequently the press did not even seem to allow for the obvious imbalance between the two sides in financial resources, organization, and expertise in news media relations. Instead, like the lobbyists, the press took to counting heads and voting with the majority. Newspapers were dotted with phrases like "Many scientists, and they appear to be clearly the majority, are fearful [of] too much regulation," as *The New York Times* reported on December 15, 1977. By the end of 1977, according to a recent study by Nancy Pfund and Laura Hofstadter at Stanford University School of Medicine, who examined press coverage of industrial de-

velopments in gene splicing, direct quotations from scientist-critics and environmentalists, which had previously been a consistent part of coverage, were "the exception rather than the rule."

Even now, after three years of allegations that criticism is being suppressed, the press has not reevaluated its the-majority-rules stance. To be sure, *Newsweek* noted on March 17, 1980, that "Still, some researchers believe that the safety issue is being swept under the rug. . . . Allegedly, some researchers have lost their jobs for voicing their concerns too publicly." But such a parenthetical possibility did not deter *Newsweek* from exulting for six pages, with few reservations, over "DNA's New Miracles."

A third major argument of the lobbyists was that public health was being adequately protected by the voluntary guidelines devised at the National Institutes of Health; no legislation was needed. And again most of the general press looked no further. It did not even rise to the bait when rumors circulated and reports appeared of safety violations by influential researchers. A University of California team was accused of splicing the rat insulin gene into a kind of bacteria that had not been certified for such experiments, and Charles A. Thomas, Jr., of Harvard Medical School, who had been a member of the committee drafting the guidelines, was accused of conducting experiments without proper authorization. Passing up such opportunities for investigative reporting, most newspapers carried only the version of the facts provided by the National Institutes of Health and the universities involved.

Industry comes out of hiding

Nor did the press often question the seeming casualness of industry's interest in recombinant DNA techniques during this period. It was industry, after all, that legislators were most intent on regulating, since the scale of production, the number of workers, and therefore the potential risks, would be far greater in industrial plants than in university laboratories. But so long as Congress seemed bent on regulation, industry successfully kept a low profile. A few public interest groups and specialized magazines attempted to identify companies planning to use gene splicing — members of Peoples Business Commission, a consumer lobby, supplied copy to *Mother Jones*, *New Times*, *The Progressive*, and other willing magazines — but most of the press declined to take part in the pharmaceutical hide-and-seek.

Reporters even allowed themselves to be hoodwinked by the pro-DNA lobby when the first industry-sponsored success, the synthesis of the brain hormone somatostatin, was revealed. The news was broken not by the researchers or by the company, Genentech, but by Paul Berg, a senior scientist in the field, and Philip Handler, president of the prestigious National Academy of Sciences, in Senate hearings in November 1977. (In a letter to *Science*, David Perlman, science editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, criticized the scientific community for its "double standard," requiring journalists to wait until research reports were published, but using unpublished data when the heat was on in Congress.) The timing of the announcement — and the prestige of the announcers — allowed DNA propo-

nents to capitalize on the good news while playing down the role of industry at a delicate stage in negotiations with Congress. Berg and Handler's unexpected report, with no mention of industry's role, eclipsed press coverage of the rest of the day's testimony, much of which stressed the need for regulation. Stories in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, as well as coverage by the Associated Press and United Press International, centered on the somatostatin surprise, although Judith Randal of the *New York Daily News* led instead with the continuing concerns about regulation.

As the threat of regulation faded, the new genetics industry came out of the closet, armed with a series of announcements of new developments promising breakthroughs in treating disease. The science press, taken off guard by the intensive 1977-78 lobby, was also unprepared for the aggressive 1979-80 industrial public relations campaign. Tired of the fading, repetitive congressional battle, and plagued by Three Mile Island, test tube babies, and a number of the other complex controversies, science writers were ready for a good, clean science story, and industrial announcements of new DNA discoveries provided it.

And so the transformed DNA coverage began. As the Pfund-Hofstadter study demonstrates, sources now shifted from university researchers and lobby leaders to industrial spokesmen. According to the two Stanford researchers, in most cases the press's representation of the industrial sources "lost none of the objective and definitive flavor so often reserved for university-based academics and customarily denied to industrial spokesmen." The Stanford findings indicate that, except in publications specializing in business news, the views of industrial management and public relations sources have seldom been balanced by views from labor, federal agencies, occupational hazard experts, or even cooler scientific and financial heads.

News accounts have obligingly treated industry announcements of new developments as unique scientific achievements, rarely noting that these "scientific discoveries" are often more significant to the company than to science or the public. Spyros Andreopoulos, writing in the March 27, 1980, *New England Journal of Medicine*, pointed out by way of example the flurry of publicity generated by Genentech's September 1978 announcement that it had persuaded bacteria to produce human insulin, and that Eli Lilly would bring the product to market; the resulting stories seldom made it clear that the man-made product might not work, that it had not been shown to be biologically active. Similar qualifications were overlooked in July 1979, according to Andreopoulos, in announcements of the production of human growth hormone. And in January 1980, when Biogen announced synthesis of interferon, similar results had already appeared in a Japanese journal, and a number of competing companies were at comparable stages in the process. "A major announcement in molecular biology this was not," remarked Nicholas Wade in *Science* magazine, noting that it had nevertheless prompted a healthy eight-point increase in the price of the stock of Schering-Plough, which owned 15 per-

cent of Biogen, and that the publicity came at a time when Biogen was in the market for more investors.

To the extent that the press has taken note of the new "science by press conference," as in the *Newsweek* cover story in March, it has tended to shrug off the phenomenon as part of the growing pains of a naive molecular biology community adjusting to the world of big business. Discussing the Biogen interferon announcement, *Life* says in its May feature that a key scientist at the company, Charles Weissmann, "concedes that the press conference was handled to create the maximum impact for Biogen. . . . If all these manœuvres suggest high-powered industrial warfare rather than molecular biology, it is because gene splicing and the bio business in general are fast becoming the go-go darlings of Wall Street. . . . 'It may be against the image of the scientist,' [Weissmann] adds, 'but there's nothing wrong with making money.'"

In the meantime, the immediate and long-range political and ethical issues raised in the 1970s remain largely unreported and unresolved. Many scientists indicate, off the record, that the available data on the risks of recombinant DNA research leave many questions unanswered. Also, the National Institutes of Health voluntary guidelines, the only existing national regulatory mechanism, are widely regarded as inadequate to handle the expansion of DNA technologies, particularly in industry; members of NIH's Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee have themselves expressed serious concern in recent meetings — although *The New York Times*, in a front-page article by Harold M. Schmeck, Jr., on June 9, 1980, has been one of few publications to take note of the fact; and a subcommittee of the Federal Interagency Advisory Committee on Recombinant DNA Research has been instructed to examine industrial practices. Key congressmen have indicated that they gave up on regulatory legislation not because it was unnecessary, but because they recognized that they could not get it passed. Senator Adlai E. Stevenson III, of Illinois, who has sponsored regulatory legislation in the past, introduced a bill again this year but failed to attract support for its passage. Biologist Clifford Grobstein, a widely respected observer of the recombinant DNA scene, concludes in his *A Double Image of the Double Helix* that "The resulting stalemate leaves public policy on recombinant DNA research incomplete and unstable" — incomplete because it applies only to federally funded research, unstable because universities cannot be expected to follow the guidelines if their industrial competitors remain free of regulation, and because many issues remain unsettled, including effective risk assessment as the scale and variety of recombinant DNA practices increase.

Some observers have speculated that the DNA safety controversy, having been prematurely abandoned, will rise again. Certainly new developments in the rapidly changing field will lead to new concerns, and reporters can be expected to follow the trends. The question is whether the press will follow its own agenda rather than that of the scientific community — whether this time it will pursue the issues until they are more rationally resolved. ■

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'Truth'—and terror—in Bolivia

Chile and Argentina showed the way; now Bolivia's new regime has terrorized its press. A reporter who feared for his life files this dispatch

by GEORGE NATANSON

"I want you to know that you and other foreign press people are always welcome in Bolivia. We ask only that you report the truth."

The speaker was Dr. Georgio Loza Balsa, chief of the department of social communications at the Ministry of the Interior of Bolivia's military junta, which overthrew the legally constituted government on July 17. "Journalists have come to Bolivia with bad intentions," he went on. "They have chosen to ignore the truth. That is why I asked you to come to my office so I could explain our objectives. . . ."

I was part of a five-man CBS News crew that had just arrived in La Paz, a month and a half after the coup, to update our story on Bolivia's upheaval. I had visited Bolivia on assignment twice before, the last time just after the coup. Now, over the next five days, before having to leave hurriedly, I experienced firsthand just how far the generals would go to ensure that only their "truth" would be sent out to the rest of the world.

"The dissemination of truth is among the regime's major concerns," continued Loza, a fair, slightly built man who, according to reliable reports, had been charged with fatally shooting a campesino who had trespassed in his garden. The charges were dropped when the military came to power.

Loza betrayed only slight impatience when asked what he meant by truth.

George Natanson is a free-lance writer in Mexico City on assignment for CBS News.

"Truth," he said, "is obvious. The military government has brought a new era to Bolivia. You will find during your stay with us that the armed forces have undertaken the patriotic task of bringing law and order out of chaos. Our people are not yet ready for democracy, and that is a truth. Our people do not want to be bothered by elections. They must work, they must produce. . . . The objective of our government is to cleanse Bolivia of communist extremism in all its forms and by any means possible. We will rid the country of leftist agitators."

The foreign press had come to Bolivia to bear witness to the start of a reign of terror. While Bolivia has witnessed 188 changes of government in its 155 years of national life, the most recent change was unlike all the others in its sweep and ruthlessness, as evidenced by mass arrests, disappearances, and torture. Lending international significance to the coup is the fact that the new regime, helped to power as it was by Argentina, represents the northward spread of the southern cone's brutal ways.

Bolivia's junta, under the leadership of General Luis García Meza, is convinced it is the target of an international

communist conspiracy, and that journalists are part of this conspiracy. Keenly aware of the damage done the Chilean and Argentine juntas by press accounts focusing on repression there, Bolivia's generals immediately declared war on the press, both domestic and foreign. Their campaign proved remarkably effective.

On the day of the coup, twenty-five Bolivian reporters, including several who worked for international wire services, were gathered in the National Palace for a press conference. When the palace was seized in a lightning raid, all twenty-five were taken to army headquarters, where, for the first thirty-six hours of their confinement, they were forced to lie face down in horse manure and told that if they moved they were dead. (Most were released within three weeks, but as of late September three reporters were still in detention.)

All newspapers were shut down for four days following the coup, and radio and TV stations were forced to tie into a national hookup run by the military. Radio Fides, a Catholic station known for its pungent criticism and thoughtful analysis of national affairs, was demolished by paramilitary thugs. Two

The darkness spreads: July's bloody military coup, centered in La Paz (below), sought to purge the country of "leftist agitators" — including the foreign press



Brazilian journalists who accidentally happened on a protest demonstration and witnessed the military's means of breaking it up — soldiers fired into the crowd, killing two men — were held for nearly eight hours, then released in the custody of their ambassador. *Newsweek* deemed it wise to pull out its correspondent, Larry Rohter, before the magazine published his hard-hitting story tying the military regime to the Bolivian cocaine trade. Gary Treadway of the Voice of America was held for a night for filing a similar story.

The Associated Press and United Press International were prime targets in the foreign-press field. Their offices were seized on the day of the coup, and reporters were not permitted to use the facilities for nearly a month. (AP reporter Harold Olmos, a Bolivian national, was eventually ordered into exile by the Ministry of Information.) Meanwhile, telex service was cut off and long-distance telephone service was, at best, erratic. Reporters were forced to resort to codes and other subterfuges to get their copy out of the country. Plainclothes agents of the Ministry of the Interior moved into the hotel in La Paz where many members of the foreign press were staying. News personnel were advised by government officials to stay in close touch with their respective embassies.

Soon after the coup, several reporters, including Ray Bonner of CBS Radio and Tim Ross of ABC Radio, traveled some 200 miles from La Paz to the state-owned tin mines at Siglo Viente. They hoped to investigate reports that the Bolivian Air Force was indiscriminately bombing mining communities and killing many people, including women and children. Before they could reach their objective, Bonner and Ross were stopped by military authorities, who confiscated their tape recorders, tapes, and notebooks. As a result of this incident, and of learning from friendly sources that the military had him on their hit list, Bonner finally fled Bolivia in fear of his life. (Amnesty International later confirmed the occurrence of massacres like those reported to have taken place at Siglo Viente.)

My own experiences during my first visit following the coup were harrowing enough. I and the rest of the CBS crew

were picked up and detained seven times in four days for periods of up to five hours — in each case for filming, or attempting to film, “military objectives.” In addition to the tanks and soldiers stationed in the streets and guarding the university, the “military objectives” included the National Palace and the congressional building.

One day I received two anonymous phone calls. The first, at two in the morning, was terse: “Get out of town or your guts will be spread out in front of the hotel.” The second was even more graphic: Leave or “your prick will be cut off and put in your mouth.” I decided to go. I took a taxi to the Peruvian border — no flights were available — and, after being held up for three hours, was finally permitted to leave.

It was a month later that we returned to Bolivia on our update assignment. We were clearly not expected. The Air Force officers who had assumed the duties of immigration and customs inspectors finally ordered us to report immediately to Minister Loza's office. After leaving our equipment and baggage in our hotel, we arrived at the Interior building, where we were ushered into Loza's chambers, served coffee, and given our lecture on truth.

We were later told on good authority that the building in which Loza's office was located housed not only the regime's national security, intelligence, and police forces, as was public knowledge, but also, in its basement, torture cells. It was in this building that Mary Helen Spooner, a U.S. citizen and freelance reporter for *The Economist* and *The Financial Times* of London, had been held for a week. And it was here that Albert Brun, chief of the Agence France-Presse bureau in Lima, Peru, had been jailed for five days. Accused by the military of filing false stories, both had undergone long hours of intensive interrogation in a small room furnished only with a chair and a single light bulb that burned twenty-four hours a day. (Brun later told me that neither he nor Spooner had been physically harmed).

Loza and his colleagues offered us their assistance during our stay and promised to help us secure interviews with the president and other high gov-

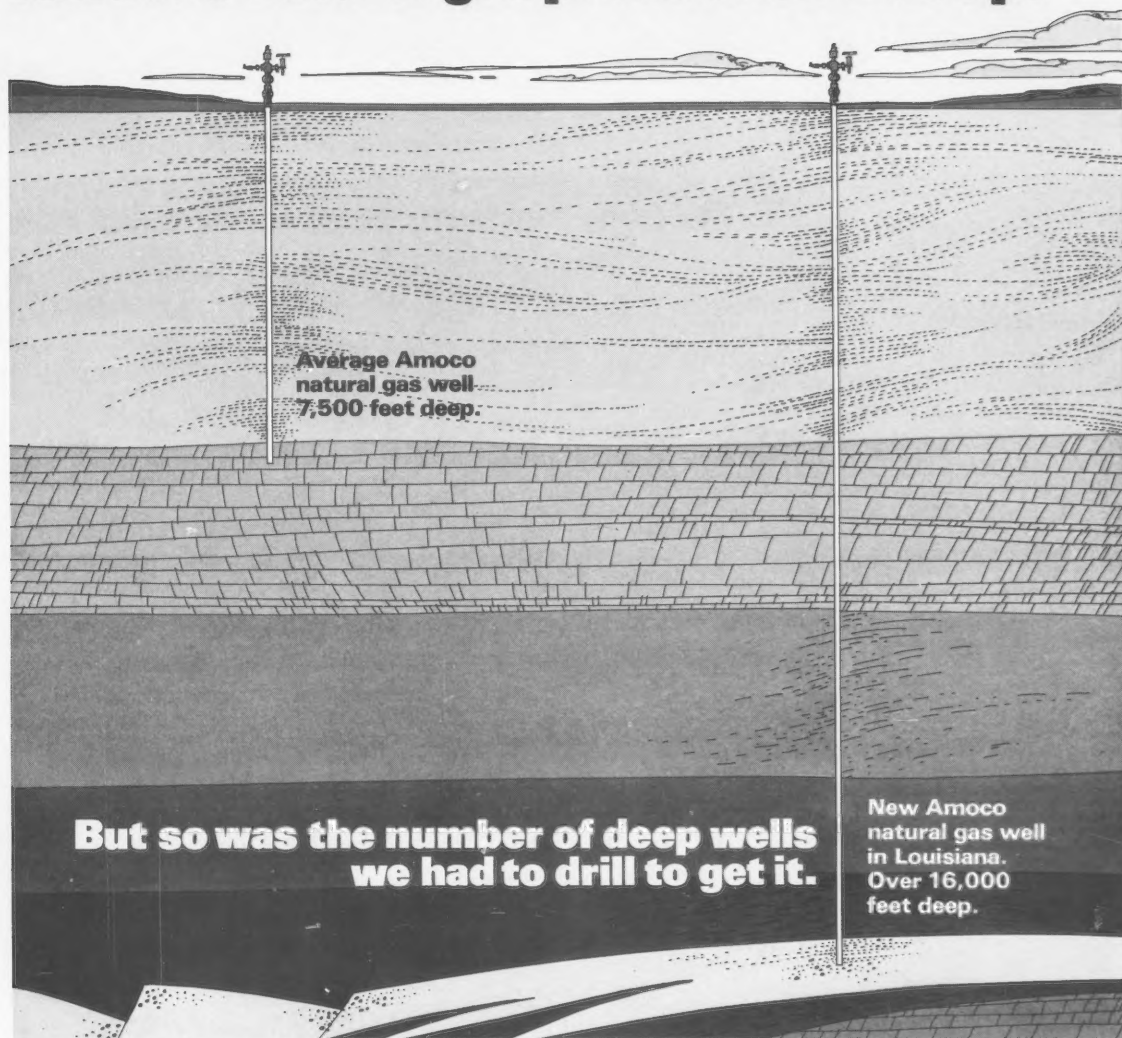
ernment officials. Such interviews would have allowed us to present the government's side of the story, but all our efforts to confirm the meetings we had been promised were in vain. We never again saw or heard from Loza or anyone else connected with the regime. But that their agents were keeping an eye on us we had no doubt. We were followed wherever we went. Informed by reliable sources that an impressive array of wiretapping equipment had been brought in from Argentina, we assumed that our hotel phones were under surveillance. Thus, our conversations with the CBS foreign desk in New York were constrained.

One experience particularly jolted us. CBS producer Bob Beers returned to his hotel room one evening to find one of his neckties hanging from a heating vent in the ceiling in the middle of the room, an ominous knot tied in the middle. Someone, we felt, was trying to tell us something.

Still, we tried to carry out our assignment. One day we managed to film an interview with a very brave priest who had told us what he knew firsthand of the junta's repression — the midnight arrests, the torture, the disappearance of persons, many from his own parish. We had taken every precaution to throw off any possible tail on our way to and from the house where the interview took place. But, with the tie incident fresh in our minds (and the interview cassettes safely in our possession), we decided to leave the country at once. We booked a flight departing at three o'clock the following morning for Santiago, Chile, and were greatly relieved when it took off, leaving behind the plainclothesmen who had followed us up to the last minute.

Local reporters, of course, do not have the option of leaving the country so easily. And for those who oppose the military takeover, the situation is particularly grim. Before the foreign press was set upon by the armed forces, it was known from a variety of sources, including the Catholic Church, that more than 2,500 people had simply disappeared. Now that the generals have won their battle — having bullied the domestic press into submission and having driven out most of the foreign press — no one really knows what is going on inside Bolivia. ■

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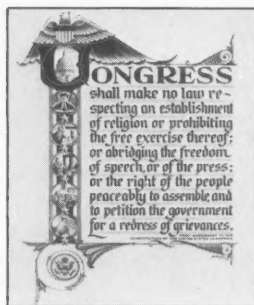
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judgment of his peers or (and)
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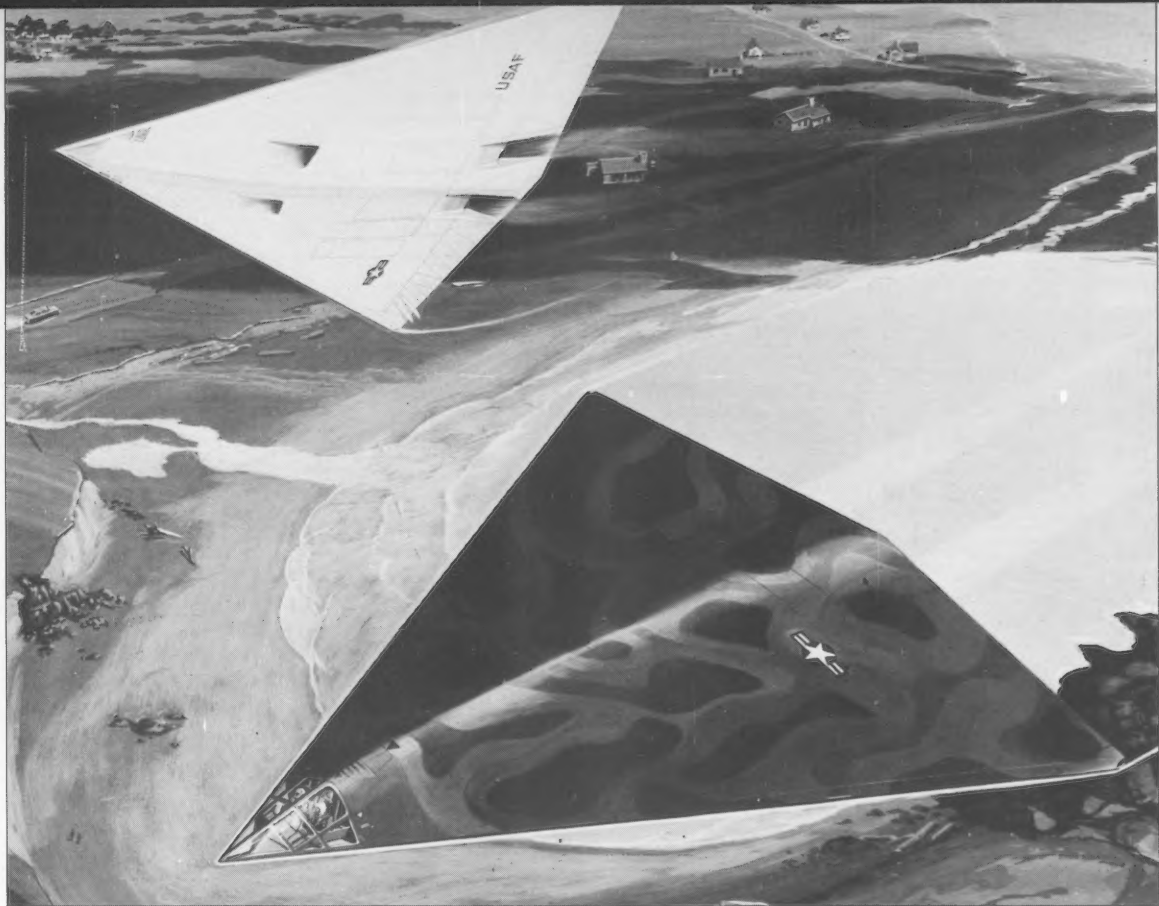
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Courtesy Boeing

See it now: Two months before the Pentagon went public with Stealth, Aviation Week featured this design of a delta-wing plane, one of several employing Stealth technology. The plane's streamlining helps reduce its radar "signature"

The invisible story

Busy chasing leaks, the press seldom asked if Stealth was all it was cracked up to be

by MICHAEL MASSING

The nation was recently treated to a demonstration that Stealth technology is, as has been claimed, an impressive achievement. By combining such technical innovations as exhaust shields, radical streamlining, and materials that absorb radar beams, the Pentagon has succeeded in conjuring up an aircraft

Michael Massing is executive editor of the Review.

that can be sent aloft in the middle of a presidential campaign and yet remain invisible to the Pentagon press corps.

Stealth certainly left some interesting episodes in its wake as it streaked through the nation's press in August and September. There was the perhaps unprecedented case of a journalist (Benjamin Schemmer, editor of *Armed Forces Journal*) appearing voluntarily before a congressional committee to testify about a story leaked to him. There was Jack Anderson, fresh from disclosing plans for a new Iran raid, attacking Secretary of Defense Harold Brown for going public with military secrets. Not since Daniel Schorr gave *The Village Voice* a copy of the super-secret Pike committee report on the CIA had the matter of leaks been such succulent political fare, and not since Deep

Throat had journalists been so obsessed with who was doing the leaking.

Most observers, of course, especially those sympathetic to the Republicans, believed that the Carter administration had leaked Stealth to deflect criticism that it was "soft" on defense; others pointed the finger at Congress. But such speculation somehow seemed beside the point. For, as the press expended its energies on answering the question "Who lost Stealth?" it overlooked a couple of far more pressing questions — "What is Stealth?" and "Will it work?" "The leak aspects have overwhelmed the story," observed Ike Pappas, Pentagon correspondent for CBS News. "The special hearings, the special news conferences, the speeches — all these things have diverted attention from the military aspects of Stealth."

continued

As a result, Harold Brown's extravagant claim for the invisible aircraft — that it represents a "major technological advance" that "alters the military balance significantly" — was largely accepted at face value.

To be sure, many technical details about Stealth's operations remained classified, preventing a comprehensive evaluation. To properly discuss Brown's statements about the program, says Richard Burt of *The New York Times*, a reporter "needs access to the technology, to sit down with the people who would know the technology. But you can't do that now." But, even with the Pentagon's clamp on the program, wasn't it possible to discuss Stealth, and its national security implications, in an intelligent way? In an effort to find out, I visited the Center for Defense Information in Washington, a nonprofit research institute, founded by retired Rear Admiral Gene La Rocque, that often challenges official arms estimates. I talked with two staff analysts there, Dr. Thomas Karas and William Arkin. "Secretary Brown said the development of Stealth is a revolutionary thing," said Arkin, a former Army intelligence analyst and author of a research guide on military and strategic affairs that will be published this fall. "I'm really skeptical of that claim. I'd think the press would be, too, but they haven't been." He argued that the recent history of military R&D counsels caution regarding the claims being made for Stealth; only rarely have heralded weapons systems lived up to initial expectations.

For example, Arkin said, so-called precision-guided weapons, which attack targets with great accuracy, were the rage in military circles after being used to great effect in the 1973 Mideast war. "There was a group in the Pentagon that believed this was a revolutionary development in warfare — the same language Brown is using today," Arkin told me. Enthusiasm for the devices has since waned, largely because their effectiveness depends so much on weather conditions and the countermeasures taken.

When the precision weapons were being touted, Arkin went on to say, reporters examined the claims being made for them with some care, aided as they were by the existence of a group within

the military that opposed the new system. On Stealth, however, "the press got into leaks and secrecy and never questioned the weapon itself," despite evidence, as others told me, that the new technology, too, has its critics within the Pentagon.

Karas, a long-time specialist in nuclear warfare and a former professor at Boston University, pointed out that although the press has followed the Pentagon's lead in presenting Stealth as a replacement for the aging B-52 bomber, in fact "there is no bomber. There is simply a technology — a combination of technical developments which could eventually be developed into a bomber. We have used the technology on a few tactical aircraft, but as yet there is no Stealth bomber." What's more, he said, since such a bomber "is so far off," it is questionable whether, by the time it is operational, it will still be "invisible" to increasingly sensitive detection devices. For instance, satellite surveillance is becoming so sophisticated that within a few years it could be used to detect the flight of missiles or planes, however Stealthy they may be.

After talking with Karas and Arkin, I paid a visit to the Brookings Institution, where I met with Robert P. Berman, a specialist in Soviet military affairs and the author of a book on Soviet strategic planning. Most reporters "have played up the charge and countercharge [on the Stealth leak]," he said, "rather than doing a little more homework and coming up with suppositions as to what this means for U.S. national security, and what defenses the Soviets are likely to mount." Contrary to Brown's statements that Stealth "alters the military balance significantly," Berman said, the new technology "does not produce a dramatic change in the balance of power, but lets the U.S. bomber force continue to penetrate the Soviet Union in time of world war — something we've been able to do with a fair degree of confidence since 1950." He pointed out that the SR-71 reconnaissance plane, which technologically is very similar to a Stealth craft, has very probably been flying missions close to Soviet and Chinese territory for years without having been shot down. "Where you start

to see revolutionary change," he added, "is when you begin to have this twist transferred to ICBMs, for example. Will you be able to launch an ICBM in twenty years without its being seen? If what's happening is to make things less visible across the board, then you have some very interesting possibilities." So, in Berman's view, any payoff from the new technology may be a very long time in coming.

As regards the likely Soviet reaction to the new system, Berman said that in contrast to the simple process described by most politicians and recounted by most reporters — the Russians getting a big jump as a result of the disclosure — Soviet reaction is "a very, very complex process involving long-range planning. Right now there's a character in the Soviet Union who's dealing with defense procurement in 2010. I imagine that in 1970 there were Soviet planners putting together defense components for 1990." It is almost certain, he said, that Stealth technology has already entered into that long-range process. And, he added, "with as open a society as this country is, it's likely they knew about it the day we knew about it."

Berman also referred to another crucial factor that the press almost totally ignored in its Stealth reports: cost. It is perhaps characteristic of the current spendthrift attitude toward defense that a new, inevitably expensive technology could be proposed without prompting much curiosity among reporters about its ultimate cost. The subject was briefly alluded to at an August 22 Pentagon press conference, at which Under Secretary of Defense William Perry said that "the cost of airplanes built with this combination of technologies on a dollar per pound basis is probably not substantially different from the cost of building airplanes on a dollar per pound basis with conventional techniques." A reassuring statement, but given the administration's obvious interest in promoting the invisible plane, and the long history of military boondoggles, Perry's assertion should have been greeted with more scrutiny and less faith than it was. An item in the August 11 *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, in fact, contained a tantalizing reference: "Perry's stealth bomber, one senator complained, is too small, will cost \$14-\$15 billion for 50

Spiders

E.O. Wilson: Let me remind you that people everywhere, a large percent of the population, at a very early age have already developed a deep horror at the sight of snakes or spiders with nothing more than gentle nudging from their parents, if that. Yet, in spite of the fact that parents constantly reinforce their children against going near electric sockets, automobiles, knives and the like, phobias against such objects rarely develop.

Marvin Harris: Let's go back again to the possibility that these phobias are genetically programmed — which I'm willing to grant. The overwhelming bulk of the socially conditioned response repertoires of different human societies consists, by your own admission, of culturally determined rather than genetically determined traits. Then it seems to me that when one offers a cogent culturological explanation of these phobias, it has to be considered that this explanation is the only one offered in isolation.

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... instances of human emergence of state-organized societies or the emergence of stratified classes and castes. The enormous differences between industrial civilization and pre-industrial societies, recent or will be, are

aircraft and cannot be ready by 1987, the date requested by Congress." That cost figure works out to roughly \$300 million a plane, without beginning to factor in inevitable cost overruns. Yet a survey of several national dailies in the weeks after the disclosure showed no mention of that, or any other, estimate.

The *Aviation Week* passage quoted above contains another interesting item — an unnamed senator's expressions of skepticism about Stealth. There are indications that he was not alone. According to John McWethy, ABC News's Pentagon correspondent, "There are a number of critics on the Hill, who have not come forward, who are essentially skeptical of whether Stealth will fly. . . . It's a story waiting to be done." In the rush to report the brush war over leaks, however, few reporters delved into the matter.

One task the press did aggressively pursue was tracking down references to Stealth that had appeared before the mid-August "cascade" of leaks Brown cited to justify his decision to go public with the program. It was discovered, for instance, that a Stealth-like craft was mentioned in a spy novel written two years ago by a thirty-year-old civilian who had read about it in *Aviation Week*. Before long it came out that the July 23, 1976, *Aerospace Daily*, a Washington newsletter, had devoted two pages to describing in detail a "one-man 'stealth' aircraft" under construction by Lockheed — moving *The Christian Science Monitor* to observe playfully in an August 25 headline 'STEALTH' PLANE: A SECRET THAT'S BEEN OUT SINCE 1976. Even that proved not completely accurate: it turned out there had been a 1975 reference in an obscure Washington business publication. In view of such a rich history of Stealth in print, Harold Brown, when asked whether his disclosure had aided the Russians, replied, "The fact is, they follow all of this stuff" — and thus had presumably known about the invisible plane for quite some time.

But, despite the evidence their own sleuthing had produced, most reporters failed to draw this obvious conclusion. Acknowledging that details about the program may have appeared in the past, they took the position that it was the government's expression of faith in

Stealth's potential that really mattered. "As the administration cranks up its apology machine, we are learning of more and more places where something about the secret program was mentioned," *The Wall Street Journal* noted in a September 9 editorial; more important, however, "Mr. Brown personally provided the big secret about Stealth — that the highest defense officials in the U.S. considered it of decisive importance." Two days later, a news analysis by George C. Wilson, the *Washington Post's* Pentagon correspondent, detailed the claim of unnamed defense experts that Brown had handed the Soviets a "gem of information" by acknowledging that "Stealth is not just another technological dream but a fully realized weapon" — a description that went even beyond Brown's claim.

There were occasional reminders in the press that Stealth might not be a military wonder drug, a healer of all the Pentagon's aches and pains. Most correspondents did note in passing that one or two of the test planes had crashed; only the exceptional few (Walter S. Mossberg of *The Wall Street Journal* was one) linked that "aberration" to possible aerodynamic problems that invisible aircraft might encounter because of their extreme streamlining. Malcolm W. Browne, a science writer for *The New York Times*, performed a service by explaining the technical principles that underlie Stealth and tracing their origins back to World War II. The long history of radar development led Browne to conclude on September 7:

If, as Secretary Brown has claimed, Stealth technology "alters the military balance," it remains to be seen how long the United States can maintain its edge. It seems unlikely that Moscow, whose military technology grows more sophisticated by the month, could have been so ignorant of radar's characteristics as to be astonished by Mr. Brown's announcement.

A non-American report on Stealth, appearing in *The Economist* on August 30, shows how refreshing a dispassionate perspective can be. After observing that "Stealth, by using different techniques, would bid fair to avoid detection by today's radars," the London-based weekly noted:

Fine, but it is still an idea only. One design

for the bomber would look like a flying wing, and the limitations imposed by the anti-radar changes will probably mean that it can fly neither very low nor very fast. If the Russians figure out a way to locate it, it could be a sitting duck. And they will have quite some time to do their figuring. Even if the Americans go full ahead with Stealth, they probably cannot have it in service until well after 1987, the date congress originally wanted.

Why were such expressions of caution scarce when it came to describing a lavishly praised technology that is still only in the testing stage? "Brown is on record as saying Stealth works and will be used in any new manned bomber," says the *Post's* Wilson. Given the classified nature of the technology, he adds, "I have to take his word that it is a major advance." To prove otherwise, he says, would possibly incur a violation of national security. The *Times's* Burt observes more generally, "There's no gusto in the Pentagon press corps to go digging for what the Pentagon says is highly secret. I don't think anybody gets too much delight out of getting secrets that would help the Russians develop a countermeasure."

The merit of that position, of course, has been the subject of lively debate among journalists ever since the Bay of Pigs. The Stealth affair provides another case in which reporters confront seemingly conflicting demands of national security and an informed public. Reflecting on that dilemma with regard to Stealth, Edward Teller, a man whose name has long been synonymous with national security, wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* on September 18:

National policy most often seems to overlook the fact that providing clear information to the public may be even more important than trying to keep the Soviets from obtaining information. The latter may be effectively impossible; the former is so often neglected that the public is misled concerning vital matters of defense.

If so, the Pentagon press corps's criticism of Brown and its neglect of the real Stealth story may have been prompted by more than simple zest for a rousing political dogfight. Its handling of the story shows just how far many reporters and editors are willing to draw the mantle of national security over matters of pressing public concern. ■

Buenos Aires: 400 Years Young.

One of the world's great cities is celebrating its 400th birthday this year: Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina.

And many of the world's great have come to help celebrate—including Queen Sophia of Spain . . . President Joao Baptista Figueiredo of Brazil . . . Mayor Maurice Ferre of Miami . . . Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles . . . Mstislav Rostropovich and the National Symphony Orchestra . . . Zubin Mehta and the Philharmonic Orchestra of Israel . . . and countless others.

Looking at metropolitan Buenos Aires today, with its nine million inhabitants, soaring skyscrapers, busy factories, bustling airports, crowded theaters and modern hospitals, it is difficult to imagine its birth in 1580 as a tiny village of barely 200 people on an unknown river thousands of miles from civilization.

For nearly 200 years, the town slept until in 1776 the viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata was created with its seat in Buenos Aires.

Between 1860 and the First World War, European immigrants arrived by the hundreds of thousands, swelling the city's population. In 1905, it was one million; in 1927, it was two million; in 1947, it was nearly 4.7 million, making it the largest Spanish-speaking city in the world.



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- Features more than 12 universities, 50 museums, 500 libraries and 40 theaters, including the world famous Teatro Colon opera house.
- Is ringed with plazas, parks and tree-lined boulevards—and blessed with a year-round temperate climate.
- Boasts more than 50 different *barrios* or neighborhoods—and is the birthplace of the tango and the home of the best steaks in the world.
- Plays almost every sport under the sun, hosting and winning, for example, the 1978 World Soccer Cup at its River Plate Club stadium, the nation's largest.
- Has four TV channels, nine daily newspapers, more than 50 major magazines and 25 publications in foreign languages.

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Buenos Aires: 400 years young, and yet to reach its full potential.

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CUSHIONING THE CREDIT CRUNCH

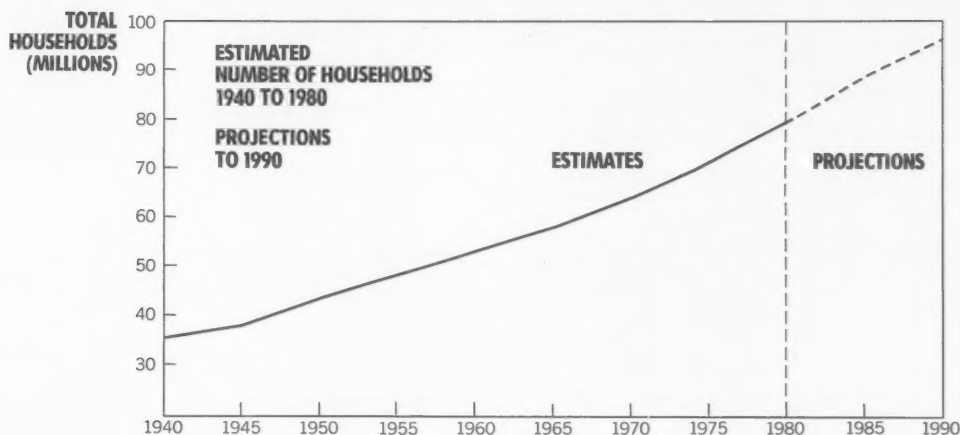
This has happened off and on for the last 15 years. Yet millions of families found their mortgage money. More than a trillion dollars worth of new mortgage loans have been made since 1965. One reason is that there is a huge secondary market for mortgages, a complex system of private businesses and government agencies which buys mortgages from the original lenders, thereby replenishing their supply of money. One part of that market is the Federal National Mortgage Association, or Fannie Mae, a shareholder-owned corporation working in the private sector.

THE WINDOW THAT NEVER CLOSES

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There are TK fact-checkers in the U.S.

Or, do elderly magicians *really* hang spoons on their noses?

by PAMELA RIDDER

The immunity journalists had in the early seventies no longer exists. If you call somebody a thieving pigfucker now, you'd better be ready to produce the pig.

Hunter S. Thompson,
interview, 1978

Writing in *Mother Jones* last August, Adam Hochschild, one of the magazine's editors, noted that there were probably fewer than one hundred fact-checkers in the United States. When fact-checkers read this some of them were outraged. They are dead sure, they say, that many more than one hundred people ply their

Pamela Ridder is *CJR*'s fact-checker.

specialized trade. How many more is open to question — any answer would be a guess or, at best, an estimate, and any checker can tell you that an estimate is just not good enough.

In any case, wherever magazines are published in the United States an unspecified (and, though fact-checkers can't prove it, probably growing) number of persons are sitting at their desks, underlining words they didn't write, confirming figures they didn't dig up, and altering articles they are not editing. And if they're talking on the telephone, you can hear their questions floating through the air: "Are you completely bald?" "Is it true that people in Seattle jog with their sunglasses on?" As fact-checkers, or researchers — the terms are often used interchangeably — their job, usually not very well paid, is to verify the accuracy of every figure, statement, and quote that goes into the magazine they work for.

For one "Talk of the Town" piece, I had to determine the number of Ritz crackers in a

huge New Jersey supermarket. I called the general manager of the store, who then shouted to an assistant over their PA system. The assistant went to count the number of Ritz boxes on the floor while the manager and I tried to estimate the number of crackers in a box. We then went through the same process with hot dog packages.

Peter Canby, checker,
The New Yorker

Magazines may have from one full-time researcher (*Mother Jones*) to thirty-eight (*Newsweek*), or they may (like *CJR*) have only a part-time checker. A few magazines hire free-lancers, and some, such as *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The Nation*, say they cannot afford to employ someone who does nothing but check facts; as a rule they depend on the people in their copy departments to double as checkers. In such cases, a magazine may work on a "hunch system," as Louise Desaulniers, managing editor of the *Atlantic*, puts it. "We can't check everything; there's not enough time. But after thirty years here, I have an instinct for what may go wrong."

continued



Many of the facts checkers are expected to check are esoteric or trivial. Peter Canby of *The New Yorker* had to attend a luncheon for elderly magicians to find out whether they really hang spoons on their noses. (They do.) "You carry an amazing amount of garbage in your head," says Ellen Fair, the chief of *Esquire's* four-person research department. "Where else would you have to know that Playboy Bunny is capitalized because it is a registered service mark?"

One of the main reasons magazines have checking departments is to ward off libel suits. In 1970, in *Time Inc. v. Mary Alice Firestone*, for example, a jury awarded Firestone \$100,000 in damages for a factual error in *Time's* Milestones section. (*Time* had misstated the ground on which she had been divorced.) More and more magazines are hiring researchers because, as one checker succinctly explained, "The best way to avoid litigation . . . is to know what you are talking about."

In 1976, Mike Wallace took the *National Enquirer* to task on a segment of *60 Minutes*; he examined several *Enquirer* issues and came up with such dubious items as a photo of Freddie Prinze hugging Raquel Welch which turned out to be two different photos pasted together. Thus rudely alerted to its vulnerability to libel suits, the *Enquirer*, a few months later, laid out \$13 million to establish a research department staffed by twenty-eight full-time researchers. Since then, gossip items have been printed only if there are at least two eyewitnesses and, whenever possible, interviews are taped and sent to the researchers for confirmation of quotes. The *Enquirer* maintains that it has not lost a major libel suit since the department was set up. "Researchers are becoming more and more valuable," says Victor A. Kovner, a communications lawyer whose firm has represented, among others, *Esquire*, *Rolling*

Stone, and *New York*. "The better the department is, the less likely there will be claims."

I had to verify a photo of Warren Beatty's house. I could see that a van was parked at the corner of the building so I had the picture enlarged and then enlarged again until I could read the telephone number of a plumbing company on the side of the van. I called the company, described the house, and they said, "Yes, that's Mr. Beatty's new house."

Martha Moffett, researcher,
National Enquirer

Another reason why magazines have checking departments is simply that they want to be believed. Checkers see themselves as the "conscience of the magazine"; they are there to uphold their magazine's standards of accuracy and credibility. And that means checking everything that's checkable. "Every fact has the same weight," explains Sara Lippincott, the chief of *The New Yorker's* checking department, the oldest — it was established soon after the



Edward Koren

magazine was founded in 1925 — and the most famous of them all. “If you screw up on something small, trivial, then you cast doubt on the whole piece. We trudge through every inch of it because once you’ve lost your credibility, that’s it.” Expert checkers not only have to be meticulous; they also have to possess a sixth sense about what looks wrong or what source looks unreliable. “We’re supposed to know by instinct when *The New York Times* is wrong,” says Peter Canby. “It’s that instinct that makes a good checker.”

Fact-checking an article essentially means re-reporting it. Authors are normally asked to hand in all their research when they hand in their piece: notes, interview tapes, books, legal documents, phone numbers, etc. (Deborah Branscum, the researcher at *Mother Jones*, recently finished checking an article on the Laborers International Union; the documentation — including articles, memos, reports, and NLRB briefs — weighed in at fourteen pounds.) The checker then goes through the piece, checking both against the author’s sources and, when possible, against independent sources as well. Most of the work is done over the telephone, but if necessary checkers will go out into the field. At *The New Yorker*, which has eight full-time checkers, nothing is placed in the way of getting the facts right. Checkers have made trips to, among other distant places, the British Museum and Nova Scotia. In earlier years, checkers assigned to work on pieces by the scholar and critic Edmund Wilson were invited to his house in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, where, Sara Lippincott has recalled, they would “paw through everything in his desk and sometimes, rather wickedly, he would engage them in serious and somewhat one-sided conversations on certain fine points of Hebrew grammar.”

Controversial statements have to be handled with kid gloves, particularly if they are within quotes. If there is no written or taped record, “sources” are apt to get cold feet and deny their words. This places both the researcher and the reporter in an extremely awkward position: whom is the researcher to believe? So researchers have to tiptoe around a quote to make sure that a person could

have said it, without actually reading back the quote verbatim.

“A researcher has to be both a pariah and a diplomat,” explains Maryanne Vollers, the head of research at *Rolling Stone*. “Editors don’t want to see you, authors want to be finished, and you spend your day trying to get information from people who don’t want to talk.”

One has to feel some sympathy for those authors who have never before gone through the rigors of being checked; they’ve done their research, written their manuscript, slapped it down on an editor’s desk — and now they have to deal with a faceless voice demanding, “Where did you get this statistic? Are you sure?” Authors and editors get their revenge, however, in the form of TKs. TK stands for To Kum — when the phrase is spelled out the second word is deliberately misspelled to keep compositors from setting it in type — and signifies a blank left in the copy by editors and writers; the hapless checker has to find whatever appropriate statistic, quote, or figure is needed — and this can take hours or even days. “Giving us a list of original facts to find is abusing us,” one checker complains. “It’s not our job.”

We had a story about a man who was an inmate at Greenhaven, a maximum security prison in Dutchess County. I was sent up there to spend two days checking the story. To verify our descriptions, I measured the size of the cells, counted the number of light fixtures, etc. At one point, I had to find out the number of prisoners in the prison graveyard. I got a figure based on some files in the clerk's office. When I left, a guard took me to the graveyard itself and I counted the gravestones. There were about five more than they had in their records. When I got back to the office, I called to let them know.

Patti Hagan, checker,
The New Yorker

Statements that cannot be verified are either cut out of a piece or are qualified. Researchers quickly learn to pepper their articles with “according to,” “allegedly,” and “reportedly” to cover themselves. One golden rule of checking: if you’re not sure, attribute. And, if a statement cannot even be attributed, watch out. An article scheduled for publication at *Rolling Stone* concerned a political scandal in Washington; it

seemed like a real scoop until the author announced to the researcher that he was unwilling to reveal some of his sources on the ground of “confidentiality.” Thus prevented from verifying the author’s information, *Rolling Stone* axed the story.

Nothing should escape a checker’s eye; captions, mastheads, headlines, and even indexes are all examined for possible misspellings or other inaccuracies. *The New Yorker* checks not only cartoon captions but the drawings themselves. (Is the traffic sign pointing in the right direction? What time does the clock say?) Fiction gets a similar going-over, not only for historic names and dates but also for logic and geography. (Is it possible for a boat to sail from this town to another? Do arctic loons nest in the winter?)

Once we had a piece written about a guy who had supposedly taken part in a big jewelry heist. His name was changed for the article; we couldn't talk to him and so not much could be checked. There was a piece in New York about the robbery so most of my checking was done against the old New York story. A lot of the story concerned how they had pulled off the robbery, with all the escape routes, etc. I stupidly didn't check the route completely; he had written in exits where they didn't exist, he had streets running the wrong way. People wrote in pointing out that the alleged escape route was impossible. Later it turned out the whole article was a hoax.

David Owen, former researcher,
New York

A checker is likely to make many corrections on any given piece, but no one is infallible and inevitably mistakes slip by. Untold numbers of statistics, dates, and names have been bungled and more than a few researchers have admitted to killing off people before their time. (In a now legendary episode at *The New Yorker*, a checker left “the late” before actor Eric Blore’s name. Blore was actually in a nursing home, and a friend read the piece and wrote the magazine, requesting a correction. A correction appeared in the next issue — but Blore died before the issue hit the stands.) Deborah Branscum of *Mother Jones* also gave someone a premature death, but this was by no means her most embarrassing slip-up. Early last summer, she ne-

glected to check the correct spelling of Katharine Hepburn's name. This would have been minor — every checker has made some spelling goofs — but it occurred in the first line of an editorial praising Branscum's fact-checking prowess. "I felt like a total fool," she says.

Even the super-careful *New Yorker* occasionally makes an error — although in one well-publicized instance it was not a fact-checker's fault. The error appeared in a February 1979 John McPhee profile of a chef who had insisted on anonymity, and was therefore identified only as Otto. In the piece, Otto speculated that the turbot at Lutèce, a posh New York restaurant, must be frozen. Normally a checker would have talked to Lutèce and the restaurant's fish supplier to confirm this, but McPhee insisted that not even the checkers should be told who "Otto" really was, and the editor decided that anything pertaining to him in the profile should go unchecked — a decision for which checkers at the magazine can recall no precedent. Lutèce, which had its turbot flown in fresh from overseas, was outraged, and a few weeks later *The New Yorker* printed a brief correction.

A 1964 *Harper's* piece on the *Time* and *Newsweek* research departments characterized a researcher as "usually a girl in her twenties, usually from some Eastern college." Now there seem to be as many male as female fact-checkers, but otherwise the description is still pretty accurate. Most researchers see their job as something of an apprenticeship, not as a lifelong career. All cite the reporting, editing, and writing skills that they have picked up — "You go step by step with both the editor and the author," says *Rolling Stone's* Vollers. "You learn the whole process" — and all agree that the variety of subjects and people that they have pursued in their search for the facts have made the job worthwhile, even fascinating. Many researchers go on to become writers and editors at other publications and a few are promoted from within. Some checkers are content to stay where they are. *The New Yorker* has checkers who have been on the job for ten years. "It's an interesting, decent-paying job," says Richard Sacks, who has been a checker for six years. "Why leave?"

The reason to leave, quite simply,

may be boredom. The job requires infinite attention to detail — trivial or important — and a steady diet of checking hyphens, looking up brand names, and verifying the ingredients in food recipes can grow tedious. *Esquire's* Ellen Fair believes that a good checker will "burn out" after two to three years. "Most of it is plodding detail; you're cleaning up after other people. It's a tiresome job which is very necessary and which you have to be smart to do. Eventually you grow out of it." Ellen Pollock worked as a researcher for *New Times* and now reports for *The American Lawyer*. "Sure, you learn a lot," she says. "But \$10,000 a year and they think they're doing you a favor. It's a lousy job and no one should have to do it full-time." (Although \$10,000 salaries are not unusual, some researchers do get more. At *Time*, for instance, researchers start at \$14,000.)

Magazine editors have developed a fetish about absolute accuracy on the most inconsequential facts, a fetish that even makes the "facts" a substitute for reality.

Otto Friedrich,
"There are 00 Trees in Russia,"
Harper's, 1964

The question of whether accuracy really matters is an important one; as Otto Friedrich, a senior editor of *Time*, pointed out in his *Harper's* article, a reporter does not have to be a philosopher to realize that the facts do not necessarily represent the truth. Checkers may get every detail right in a story, but if the author has misinterpreted his information, or if there is misleading innuendo, then the "point" of the story may be completely wrong. Researchers generally lay the responsibility for the overall focus of the piece at the editor's door, although they say that they are free to criticize and to suggest changes if the piece seems off-base.

Obviously every investigative piece has its own ax to grind, every article has its point of view. A checker's job, then, is not a quest for the truth but a quest for substantiation. "I can't change the slant or attitude of a story," says David Frankel, chief of research at *New York*. "What I can do is to make sure that the reporter is standing on solid ground, that he has a defensible point of view." At *Fortune*, as well as at *Time* and *Newsweek*, researchers often find it very hard

to stick to the facts and leave the interpretation to others, since the researchers not only check a writer's copy, but may do all or much of the original reporting that goes into the article. "There's a built-in tension," explains Mary Johnston, who has been the chief of *Fortune's* research department for twenty-five years. "You have two people working on one story and there has to be only one interpretation. It's very frustrating for a researcher when a writer hands in a poor manuscript. But if the researcher really feels that the writer is on the wrong track, he or she can appeal to me, or another editor, and we will arbitrate."

A journalist named Bliss Carman wrote in the *Atlantic* in 1906 that "a fact merely marks the point where we have agreed to let the investigation cease." Clearly, the decision to let a statement rest as fact may be an arbitrary one; a checker's job is to find an authoritative source, not a definitive one, because otherwise the search would go on ad infinitum. "Sometimes you have to stop and go with what you have," says Richard Sacks of *The New Yorker*. "It's not necessarily a fact, it's a source." Try to find the per capita income of a small Latin American country and you will receive five "official" answers — you just have to pick one. Or, to use another example, books are often relied upon as sources, yet every fact-checker knows that book publishers seldom have their books checked.

In one sense, then, the role of a fact-checker may be seen as absurd; you're not looking for the truth, you're looking for an official stamp. But this does not take away from the importance of the job. If there are some facts that cannot be ultimately determined, there are also facts that *can*, and a checker can make a piece better by getting these facts right. The author may have done all the legwork, all the thinking, and all the writing, but if a checker can correct even one spelling mistake, he has contributed to the credibility of the whole piece and he has done his job. That piece then becomes someone else's printed source; it becomes part of history. "We want to get it right," says Sara Lippincott of *The New Yorker*, "because it will be picked up by somebody somewhere, and it will damn well live forever." ■

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'Failing' newspapers: a follow-up

Fast shuffle in Chattanooga

by STEPHEN R. BARNETT

Attorney General Benjamin R. Civiletti has granted antitrust immunity under the Newspaper Preservation Act for yet another joint-operating agreement (see "Monopoly Games — Where Failures Win Big," CJR, May/June). This time the papers involved were *The Chattanooga Times* and the *News-Free Press* in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Also in the picture was *The New York Times*, controlled by the same family as the "failing" *Chattanooga Times*. And that raises special questions about the tender handling the Chattanooga publishers received from Mr. Civiletti and his Justice Department.

The Chattanooga Times, published mornings and Sundays, and the *News-Free Press*, published evenings, Saturday mornings, and Sundays, came to Justice after a long history of competitive ineptitude on the part of the *Times*. The *Times* was founded in 1869 by Adolph Ochs (who used it as his base for acquiring *The New York Times*), while the *NFP* began as a weekly shopper in 1933. But the *Times*, by all accounts, has insistently aped the highbrow tone of its big-city cousin, filling its columns with national and international coverage but offering little in the way of local news or pictures or sports. The *NFP* gloried in providing just those lowbrow things, and *Times* executives now concede, according to an August 10 *Washington Post* story, that the *NFP* "is simply more in tune with Chattanooga."

In 1970 the two papers were about even in daily circulation (around 47,000 each), while the *Times* was far ahead on Sunday, with 71,000 to the *NFP*'s 46,000. But the *Times* continued to ignore its readers' tastes, and it also would

not stoop to promote its circulation competitively in response to a deluge of reduced-rate subscription offers by the *NFP*. Thus, despite the competitive edge morning papers are often thought to enjoy, the *NFP* finally passed the *Times* in daily circulation in 1975, in Sunday circulation in 1976, and in advertising lineage in 1978. The *Times*, moreover, was losing money: \$2.7 million for the years 1976 to 1979, with nearly half that loss in 1979.

In the winter of 1980 the *Times* sued for peace, and the *NFP* agreed. Under their proposed joint-operating agreement, the *Times* would fire its (unionized) printing and production employees, the weekday *Times* would be printed in the *NFP*'s (nonunion) plant, the Sunday *Times* would be killed (along with the Saturday *NFP*), and the two newspapers would set ad rates jointly, share profits, and otherwise merge their business functions — while maintaining separate news-and-editorial operations as the Newspaper Preservation Act requires.

Presenting the *Times* as a "failing" paper, the Chattanooga publishers laid

their proposal before Attorney General Civiletti on March 24. On April 29, they asked for something more. They sought "temporary approval" to put the agreement into effect immediately, asserting that the *Times* "would otherwise fail" before the procedures under the regulations can be completed." The *Times*, they claimed, was losing cash at the rate of some \$35,000 per week and could last only "two or three more weeks" unless temporary approval was granted.

On May 6, Justice's Antitrust Division recommended to the attorney general that the request for temporary approval be denied. It had not been shown that the *Times* "would otherwise fail," Antitrust said, noting that the *Times* had substantial assets which could secure a loan, that it had approached only one of four Chattanooga banks for a loan, and that it had not approached its controlling shareholder, the Ochs Trust, which had invested more than \$3 million in the paper since 1977 and "which stands to profit from a joint operating arrangement. . . ."

Antitrust cited a sworn statement by



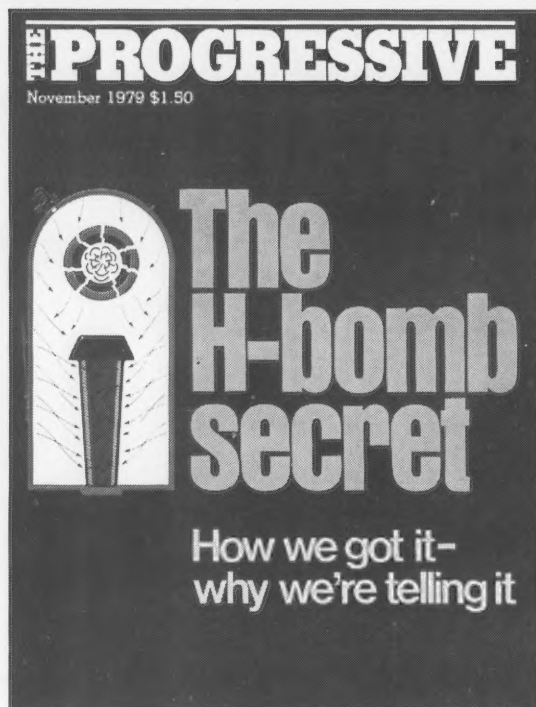
Stephen R. Barnett is a professor of law at the University of California, Berkeley.

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Donna Moody

**Antitrust
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Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, one of the three trustees of the Ochs Trust and publisher of *The New York Times*, which the trust also controls. Sulzberger — whose sister, Ruth Holmberg, is publisher of *The Chattanooga Times* — told Antitrust he could not say what the trust's response would be if the Chattanooga paper should ask it for interim financing during the application period at Justice.

What happened next was rare legal chutzpah. On May 12, six days after Antitrust's recommendation but before the attorney general acted on it, *The Chattanooga Times*, with no advance notice to Justice, dismissed its 102 production employees, closed down its presses, killed its Sunday paper, and entered into a limited joint-operating agreement with the *NFP*. The agreement was oral and its terms unclear. In response to Antitrust's rather anxious inquiries, the publishers said the arrangement included the printing of the *Times* six days a week in the *NFP*'s plant, delivery of the Sunday *NFP* to the *Times*'s Sunday subscribers, and a provision that "those advertisers who regularly utilize both *Times* and *NFP* will be serviced by *NFP*'s advertising salesmen."

On May 13, one day after the papers acted, Attorney General Civiletti denied their request for temporary approval.

The Chattanooga publishers did not get the lawsuit from Justice that their rash action courted. But they did arouse at least some initial ire. On May 19, reporting to Civiletti on the application for permanent approval of a joint-operating agreement in Chattanooga, Antitrust

recommended that the application be denied. Since the NPA says joint-operating agreements are unlawful unless they have the "prior written consent" of the attorney general, Antitrust reasoned, he has no power to grant an exemption for an agreement already in effect. Moreover, the publishers should not be allowed to defy the regulatory scheme by seeking "temporary approval" under the regulations and then, while the request is pending, taking probably irreversible action behind Justice's back.

Antitrust's hard-line position did not satisfy the attorney general. On May 23, Civiletti directed Antitrust to submit a supplemental report addressing the merits of the Chattanooga application, "assuming, without deciding, that the Attorney General does have authority" to approve it.

Meanwhile, in the face of Antitrust's blast of May 19, the Chattanooga publishers decided it was time to get themselves a Washington lawyer. They hired the Washington office of Cahill Gordon & Reindel, the same firm that represents *The New York Times*.

The new legal team started by sending Antitrust a soothing memo defending the May 12 action. Then, on June 20, the publishers sent Justice an affidavit from a Chattanooga *Times* executive reporting on the paper's financial condition after one month of the new regime. Although the *Times* had projected saving some \$22,000 per week by the May consolidation, it now said it had miscal-

culated and was actually losing some \$45,000 per week — substantially more than before the consolidation. Without approval of the proposed agreement, the *Times* said, it could continue publishing for only four to six more weeks.

On July 1, Antitrust sent Civiletti the supplemental report he had requested. This is a remarkable document — signed by Assistant Attorney General Sanford M. Litvack — that has been fairly called an "about face." Antitrust now recommended that, assuming the attorney general "does have jurisdiction" to rule on the publishers' application, he should approve it, and he should do so without holding the hearing that the regulations require for "material issues of fact."

This conclusion required a good deal of friendly indulgence. Antitrust took on faith the *Times*'s claim that its losses were, and would remain, greater under the May 12 arrangement than before, and it saw no reason to inquire into the claimed miscalculation that had produced this unfortunate result. Antitrust went on to assert that "there appear to be no reasonable prospects" of reversing the trend of losses at the *Times*. It said this without mentioning the two newspaper industry experts Antitrust had consulted (one the former circulation and advertising director for both the *Times* and the *NFP*), both of whom had advised that with proper competitive strategies the *Times* could be made profitable again.

Then there was the key question of whether new ownership could do better with the *Times* and run it competitively. The owners of the *Times*, like the owners of the *Cincinnati Post* in the preceding case before the attorney general (described in the May/June *CJR*), had declared their "failing" paper to be "not for sale." The position taken on this issue by Antitrust and Civiletti in the Cincinnati case required no efforts to sell the paper. But a publisher who refused to entertain offers was required to show "that new management or new ownership could not materially improve the newspaper's financial condition."

Antitrust in its supplemental report claimed to adhere to this position. In fact, it made a crucial change in the burden of proof. No hearing was required on the issue of possible new ownership

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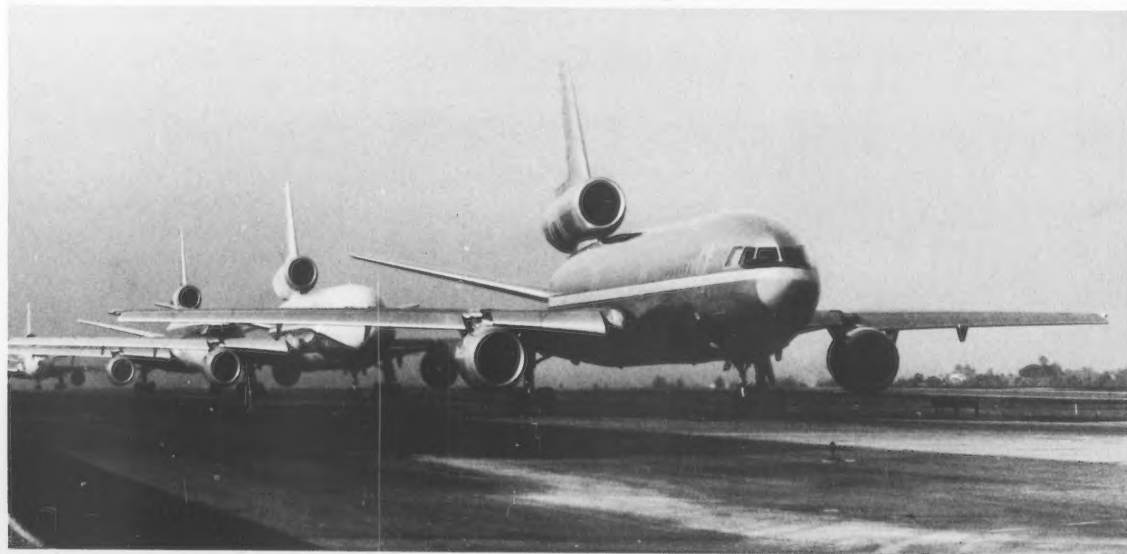


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Donna Moody

for *The Chattanooga Times*, Antitrust said, because, "Although the *Times*' management might have been more aggressive, the record does not indicate that new management could take actions likely to improve materially the *Times*' future financial condition."

On the question of offers to buy the *Times*, its president, A. William Holmberg, had told Antitrust in a sworn statement on May 2, 1980, that "no one has approached us" about it. Counsel for the *Times* subsequently conceded that this was wrong — that "sometime around April 1980," publisher Ruth Holmberg did receive such an inquiry by telephone "from someone representing a Canadian publisher" and "told the caller that the *Chattanooga Times* was not for sale." Antitrust's supplemental report said nothing about Holmberg's testimony, the subsequent correction, or any attempt by Antitrust to follow up.

Antitrust's supplemental report was, to say the least, unprofessional. Its deficiencies were well known to Attorney General Civiletti, since they were laid out fully in a July 31 brief from the International Typographical Union.

Nonetheless, on September 2, 1980, Civiletti issued his decision in which he agreed completely with Antitrust's supplemental report. Without reference to any of the contrary arguments by the ITU or to any of the omissions in the report, Civiletti ruled that *The Chattanooga Times* was a "failing newspaper" under the NPA and that there was no need for a hearing on any issue

of fact before making that decision.

The Chattanooga publishers were not completely forgiven for their May 12 naughtiness. While Antitrust in its supplemental report retracted its earlier position that the May 12 action barred the attorney general from approving their agreement at all, it stuck to the view that he should not approve those portions of it that had already been put into effect. Civiletti agreed with Antitrust on this, and it thus became crucial to determine exactly what the Chattanooga publishers had done under their May 12 agreement.

Predictably, the point was disputed, with the publishers and their lawyers backpedaling furiously from a number of their statements to Antitrust at the time of the action. The new lawyers told Justice in July that "no aspect of the originally proposed [*sic*] agreement except mechanical printing of *Times* by NFP has been implemented."

Civiletti ordered Antitrust to investigate this question and report back to him. On September 23, Antitrust reported that the elements of the agreement already instituted were joint production of the two papers by the NFP, termination of the *Sunday Times*, and switching of the *Saturday NFP* from morning to evening. Antitrust thus rejected the publishers' implausible claim that the *Saturday* and *Sunday* publication changes had been made unilaterally and not as part of the agreement. But the bottom line was that Civiletti could immunize all other elements of the originally proposed agreement, including the monopoly-creating ones of price fixing and profit sharing.

Civiletti's final action approving the crucial parts of the Chattanooga agreement could not come until October (after this issue of *CJR* went to press). Then there would be a big question: Whether the ITU would take Civiletti to court, or whether the Chattanooga publishers would pay enough by way of settlement to avoid a court test.

It is hard to look at the Chattanooga case without seeing the Ochs Trust, publisher Arthur Sulzberger, and *The New York Times*. In dealing with the Chattanooga application through *The New York Times*'s law firm, Justice knew it was dealing with the owners of *The New York Times*. Civiletti's decision to approve the crucial elements of the Chattanooga agreement, and to do so without a hearing, conferred a substantial benefit on the owners and the publisher of *The New York Times*. This was done at the start of an election campaign in which the editorial positions of that newspaper could fairly be said to carry some interest for the Carter administration. In this setting, the professional poverty of the Antitrust Division's supplemental report on which Civiletti relied raises disturbing questions.

Last March the Export-Import Bank approved a loan to an airline controlled by the publisher of the *New York Post* shortly before the *Post* endorsed President Carter for renomination. A fair-sized flap ensued in the news media and the Congress. *New York Times* columnist William Safire, for one, protested that "The press cannot defend the First Amendment with its hand out. . . . When journalism and government get too close, both suffer."

In September, when Attorney General Civiletti granted a legal privilege worth millions of dollars to a newspaper controlled by the owners of *The New York Times*, there was negligible media coverage and no flap. (*The New York Times* reported Civiletti's decision in a three-column, bylined story which failed to disclose the connection between *The Chattanooga Times* and *The New York Times* — a link it left *The Wall Street Journal* to supply.) Neither Mr. Safire nor anyone else in the media seemed concerned that the publisher of *The New York Times* had his hand out. ■

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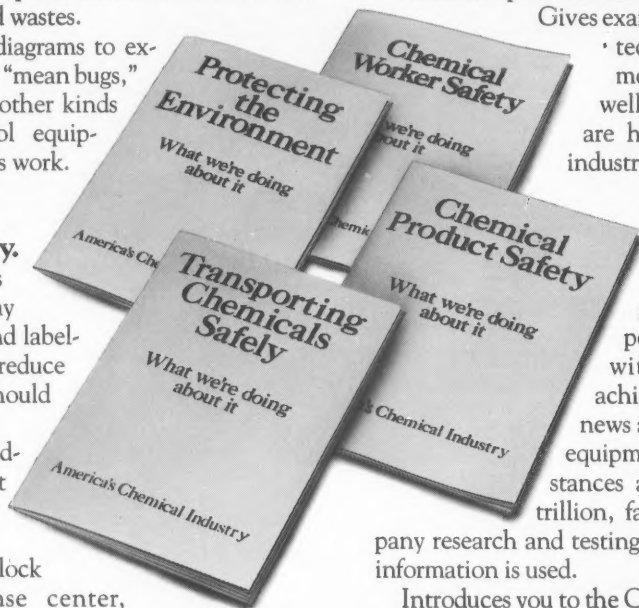
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BOOKS

Wayward, ho!

Wayward Reporter: The Life of A. J. Liebling

by Raymond Sokolov
Harper & Row, 352 pp. \$15.95

by PENN KIMBALL

A. J. Liebling wrote hundreds of pieces and millions of words for *The New Yorker* magazine during twenty-eight years, from 1935 until 1963, when he died just after turning fifty-nine. His favorite subjects (along with food and France) were the déclassé inhabitants of New York City's demimonde, the colorful characters who hung around nightclubs, gyms, greasy-spoon restaurants, and the telephone booths along Broadway and Times Square.

Liebling, who called his stint of reporting for *The Providence Journal* and *New York World-Telegram* "wasted years," revived the magazine's column of press criticism, "The Wayward Press," which had been started by Robert Benchley in 1927 and practically abandoned when Benchley moved on to other work in the thirties. Liebling picked up the column after he came back to the States in 1945 from covering the war in Europe, bringing with him a stack of underground papers which had been put out by the French Resistance movement. He contracted to do a book about this underground press whose standards of writing were set by Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre. A New York City newspaper junkie since boyhood, Liebling was struck by what he considered the qualitative superiority of the reporting and writing contained in these papers put out in the most trying and dangerous of circumstances.

In contrast, Liebling observed: "The

American press makes me think of a gigantic, supermodern fish cannery, a hundred floors high, capitalized at \$11,000,000,000 and with tens of thousands of workers standing ready at the canning machines, but relying for its raw material on an inadequate number of headline fishermen in leaky row-boats."

Liebling despised American newspaper publishers, wire services, columnists, and most editors. He bestowed his love on beleaguered reporters, and the romance was reciprocal. A Liebling cult took root in the bars and corridors where newsmen gather. Until he became bored with it and moved on to more agreeable topics — such as prizefighting or eating — "The Wayward Press" was eagerly followed for its acerbic dissection of the trade Liebling had fled.

The man had a way with words. He once described the Columbia School of Journalism, where this reviewer is a senior faculty member, as possessing "all the intellectual status of a training school for future employees of the A & P." He noted that "newspaper people speak of a police reporter, a City Hall man, and a Washington correspondent, but always of a sports writer. Upon small, coiled springs of fact, he builds up a great padded mattress of words. His readers flop themselves down on this Beautyrest and escape into a dream world where most of the characters are titanic heroes, devouring monsters, or gargantuan buffoons. . . ." Commenting on his old boss, Roy Howard, Liebling recalled how Howard's *New York Telegram*, before a forced marriage with the famous *New York World*, "was losing a million dollars a year. It was steadily losing readers, too, many of them people who had developed hallucinations from reading its prose and were dragged from subway trains slapping at adjectives they

said they saw crawling over them."

Terrific stuff. But it is all available in full text in already published anthologies of Liebling's work on *The New Yorker*. Is there a vast trove of earlier writings which the biographer has been able to rescue from newspaper morgues? Unhappily, no. The clips are mostly lost or buried in unindexed warehouse crates. Are there fascinating insights into the author's talents to be gleaned from the diaries of his developing years? Well, Liebling never liked his given name, Abbott. He was brought up in comfortable circumstances in suburban Far Rockaway and entered Dartmouth at the tender age of fifteen without ever graduating from high school. He was thrown out of Dartmouth for cutting too many chapels. He had flat feet, so was reading books when his contemporaries were cavorting around playgrounds.

His personal life as an adult was pretty much of a mess: broken marriages, huge debts, gout from overindulgence in food and drink. He moved abroad for a time to avoid U.S. income taxes. Even his best friends sometimes found him morosely silent at lunch. The more one learns about Liebling the man, the more paradoxical becomes his reputation as a journalistic saint. Or is misery the only true mother of the muse?

Raymond Sokolov's biography of Liebling portrays a raffish, not altogether likable person of large affectations and unbridled appetites. A poseur, a trencherman, a womanizer. One learns details about Liebling's person which might preferably have been left in charitable obscurity. In accounting for his decision to write the book, Sokolov describes Liebling as "a legendary figure among journalists," who "invented modern press criticism," and who "may well have been the greatest reporter of his time." Liebling, himself, would have made sport of such extravagance. But it serves to justify Sokolov's

Penn Kimball has been a writer and editor at, among other publications, The Washington Post, The New York Times, Time, Colliers, and The New Republic.

The wayward pressman at work: a Liebling sampler

attempt to analyze Liebling's writings in the manner of a literary critic examining the work of a major author of books, the only form of writing, one feels, that Sokolov thoroughly respects.

This gives a disturbing air of pretense to the whole endeavor, out of tune with Liebling's own carefully crafted tone of self-deprecation. After one aborted try at a novel, Liebling spent the rest of his life at reportage, and nearly all of that under the sponsorship of *The New Yorker*. He was a magazine man, and good at it, although he owed some of his best stories to imaginative editors who thought up things for him to do beyond chronicling what Harold Ross used to call the "lowlife" of New York City.

Liebling burst through the absurd newspaper conventions of his time to make his *New Yorker* pieces sparkle, even though his reporting sometimes skirted the edge of truth. He never let the literal facts get in the way of a good story. Writing about Parisians hanging out their windows after being awakened by a German air raid, for example, Liebling could project a vivid image: "All wore nightshirts, which, since the prosperity of tenants in a walkup is in inverse ratio to their altitude, appeared considerably dingier on the sixth and seventh floors than on the second and third." Since Liebling was as myopic as they come, we learn from Sokolov, there was no way he could have actually documented the existence of this sociologically amusing tableau. And it would probably only matter to a trainer of clerks for the A & P anyway.

On the other hand, when other correspondents were covering World War II with dramatic dispatches larger than life, Liebling stuck to the matter-of-fact recitation of small details which build to the more powerful climaxes of drab re-

The function of the press in society is to inform, but its role is to make money. The monopoly publisher's reaction, on being told that he ought to spend money on reporting distant events, is therefore exactly that of the proprietor of a large, fat cow, who is told that he ought to enter her in a horse race.

Prologue, *The Press*, 1961

Newspapers write about other newspapers with circumspection. The two surviving press associations, whose customers are newspapers, write about newspapers with deference. Newspapers write about themselves with awe, and only after mature reflection. They know and revere their awful power; like a prizefighter in a bar full of non-prizefighters, they are loath to loose it. That is why they wait until late in a presidential campaign to let the public know which man they support. The public is not supposed to be able to guess. The newspaper of even moderate self-esteem thinks that if it stated at the beginning of a campaign which candidate it favored, the other fellow might cancel his speaking engagements and quit. To avert this contretemps, the newspaper holds its right cocked as long as possible, or until the unsuspecting fellow it is going to hit has got so far along with his campaign that he will be ashamed to pull out. The paper bites its editorial lip — or, more accurately, the publisher bites the editor's lip. On 80 percent of American newspapers, he makes the editor restrain himself until he can see the whites of the Democrats' eyes. On a dwindling 20 percent, he makes him wait for the whites of the Republicans' eyes. (Headline over a story in the *World-Telegram* on October 18: U.S. DAILY NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT NIXON 4 TO 1, SURVEY SHOWS.) According to legend, though, the decision is unpremeditated. The editorialist, impartial, observes the conflict until, revolted by the gross idiocy of one party or the other, he can contain his wrath no longer. Indignation mounts within his breast, and the bursting point is reached. This happens on all

papers at about the same stage of the campaign. They begin to pop all over, and the press associations carry the pops, gravely and without comment. The preponderance of pops is supposed to show the general trend of reasonable thought throughout the country — vox pop, as it were.

"The Big Decision,"
© *The New Yorker*, October 29, 1960

The effect on the adrenal glands of the morning dip into the [Chicago] *Tribune's* cosmos is amazing. The *Tribune* reader issues from his door walking on the balls of his feet, muscles tense, expecting attacks by sex-mad footpads at the next street corner, forewarned against the smooth talk of strangers with a British accent, and prepared to dive behind the first convenient barrier at the sound of a guided missile approaching — any minute now — from the direction of northern Siberia.

"Aspirins for Atoms, Down with Babushkas!"
© *The New Yorker*, January 7, 1950

Inconsiderate to the last, Josef Stalin, a man who never had to meet a deadline, had the bad taste to die in installments.

"Death on the One Hand,"
© *The New Yorker*, March 28, 1953

Within a week after Stalin's announced demise, the American public knew that he had died of natural causes or been murdered subtly, either on the date named by *Pravda* or several weeks earlier; that the people of Moscow had demonstrated grief but (a *Journal-American* scoop) the demonstration had been a carefully organized fake; that his death portended either a hardening or a softening of policy toward the West, which, in turn, would lessen or increase the chances of open war; and that his death would either precipitate an immediate struggle for power among the surviving leaders or impel them to stand together until they got things running smoothly. . . . The subject permitted a rare blend of invective and speculation — both Hearst papers, as I recall; ran cartoons of Stalin being rebuffed at the gates of Heaven, where Hearst has no

correspondents — and I have seldom enjoyed a week of newspaper reading more.

"More News Behind the News,"
© *The New Yorker*, August 1, 1953

There is no concept more generally cherished by publishers than that of the Undeserving Poor. Newspapers may permit themselves a bit of seasonal sentimentality, like the *Times*'s 100 Neediest Cases at Christmastide or the *Herald Tribune*'s Fresh Air Camps in summer, in which their readers are invited to send in money while the newspaper generously agrees to accept the thanks of the beneficiaries. But the governing factor in most newspapers' attitude toward the mass of people out of luck is the tax rate. One way to rationalize the inadequacy of public aid is to blackguard the poor by saying that they have concealed assets, or bad character, or both. . . .

"Horsefeathers Swathed in Mink,"
© *The New Yorker*, November 22, 1947

The pattern held up to us [at Columbia's Pulitzer School of Journalism] was Adolph Ochs's colorless, odorless, and especially tasteless *Times* of 1923, a political hermaphrodite capable of intercourse with conservatives of both parties at the same time.

"How to Learn Nothing,"
The Wayward Pressman, 1947

The pattern of a newspaperman's life is like the plot of "Black Beauty." Sometimes he finds a kind master who gives him a dry stall and an occasional bran mash in the form of a Christmas bonus, sometimes he falls into the hands of a mean owner who drives him in spite of spavins and expects him to live on potato peelings.

"Dome Into Ball,"
The Wayward Pressman, 1947

The return to print of six of the seven New York dailies of general circulation after an absence of 114 days predictably produced a mass of how-glad-you-must-be-to-see-me-again prose, in which might be occasionally discerned a tinge of apprehension, as in the mien of a newly freed divorcee stepping off a plane from Nevada. Suppose, she thinks, the fellow who is supposed to be

waiting for me has formed other habits? She smiles overbrightly, and is not at her best. In this she resembles stories like CITY GOBBLES PAPERS from page one of the newly freed *World-Telegram*, which began: "After seemingly endless months without their newspapers, jubilant New Yorkers saw their world return to normal today as they gobbled up millions of copies of the city's dailies at their newsstands. . . ."

The picture of anguished millions stuffing wood pulp into their faces as if they were termites was hardly more depressing than the picture drawn by Richard Starnes, a deep thinker on the *W-T*'s split page. "The cost in money can never be calculated, the price in disrupted lives is astronomical, and the loss of the city's identity with itself inevitably will take a long time in being re-

stored," he wrote in boldface, and I found myself taking a long time to wonder what city New York identifies with now, before restoration. Columbus, Ohio? Evansville, Indiana? Covington, Kentucky? . . . "The terrible need for newspapers (and not just for newspapers with which we agree, but for all newspapers) was terribly apparent during the strike," Mr. Starnes went on to remind us. I felt retrospectively astronomically terrible. He wound up, "We were missed, we do know it, and we will continue to try to justify the esteem in which we are held." At this point, the little lady from Nevada seemed to have given up on her *promesso sposo* and turned in to one of the bars in the air terminal for a couple of jolts.

"Step by Step with Mr. Raskin,"
© *The New Yorker*, April 13, 1963

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ality. He knew when to stay out of the way of a story which in his hands appeared to tell itself.

Some of the parts of the Liebling life story most interesting to would-be reporters are not organized as such by Sokolov. Almost in passing, he tells us that Liebling never took any notes, but no one ever caught him out in a flagrant error. He wrote with phenomenal speed (he boasted he could "write better than anyone who could write faster, and faster than anyone who could write better"), but suffered agonizing dry spells for months at a time. His writing style in college was florid. He floundered during his first year at *The New Yorker*, trying to make the switch from pounding out daily newspaper features. He wrote, wrote, wrote his way into becoming a polished stylist. He read, read, read in an untutored fashion, particularly among English and French reporter-stylists such as Defoe, Cobbett, Rabelais, and Stendahl. Sokolov justifiably makes a great deal of how Liebling used the models of these past artists to fashion his own approach to journalism.

In an era of pseudo "objectivity," Liebling projected a personal voice into the flow of his stories. The reader knew where he stood, usually on the side of the underdog. Marvelous figures of speech soared from the roosts in the upper reaches of his imagination. You could tell that he loved reporting and loved to report on people who were professional about their work, however humble the skill, whether it was cleaning up after horses or decorating finger-bowls at a grand palace of gustation. One of his assets, as described by writer Jean Stafford, whom he married, was his "look of sheer benignness." Having disarmed a quarry by his air of innocence, Liebling knew how to listen. Afterwards, he would write it all down so that the reader felt he was there himself. In other words, a reporter's reporter.

But that is not quite enough for Sokolov. He wants to elevate Liebling to a loftier company, on the strength of three books published late in his life

which never sold very well: "Journalism per se," writes Sokolov, "had never been enough for him; he had always pushed against its confinements. In the last six years of his life, he ceased all real pretense at limiting himself to the reporter's genre, to the short article meant primarily for instant publication."

The three books first appeared in installments in *The New Yorker*, but that does not alter Sokolov's recurring condescension toward the practice of "mere" journalism. The books were *The Earl of Louisiana*, a profile of Earl Long and his run for reelection as governor, which did not make it as a book until after Long died in 1960; *Between Meals*, a memoir of Liebling's lifetime as a gourmand; and *Normandy Revisited*, Liebling's "masterpiece," in which he retraced his travels over ground he had previously covered as a student and war correspondent. The "culmination . . . of an entire career of self-conscious literary practice" sold only 3,500 copies. The excerpts quoted by Sokolov, however, make you want to run out right away and find a copy of that book to read, or reread, for yourself.

That may be justification enough for his having written this one.

Frames of reference

The Documentary Conscience: A Casebook in Film Making

by Alan Rosenthal
University of California Press. 436 pp.
\$19.50 cloth. \$8.95 paper

by ROBERT SKLAR

Fashions in documentary filmmaking change almost as often as skirt lengths — and if one makes allowance for a certain cultural lag, they can probably tell us more about the spirit of the times than the rise and fall of hemlines.

Nearly a decade ago, when the British filmmaker Alan Rosenthal brought out

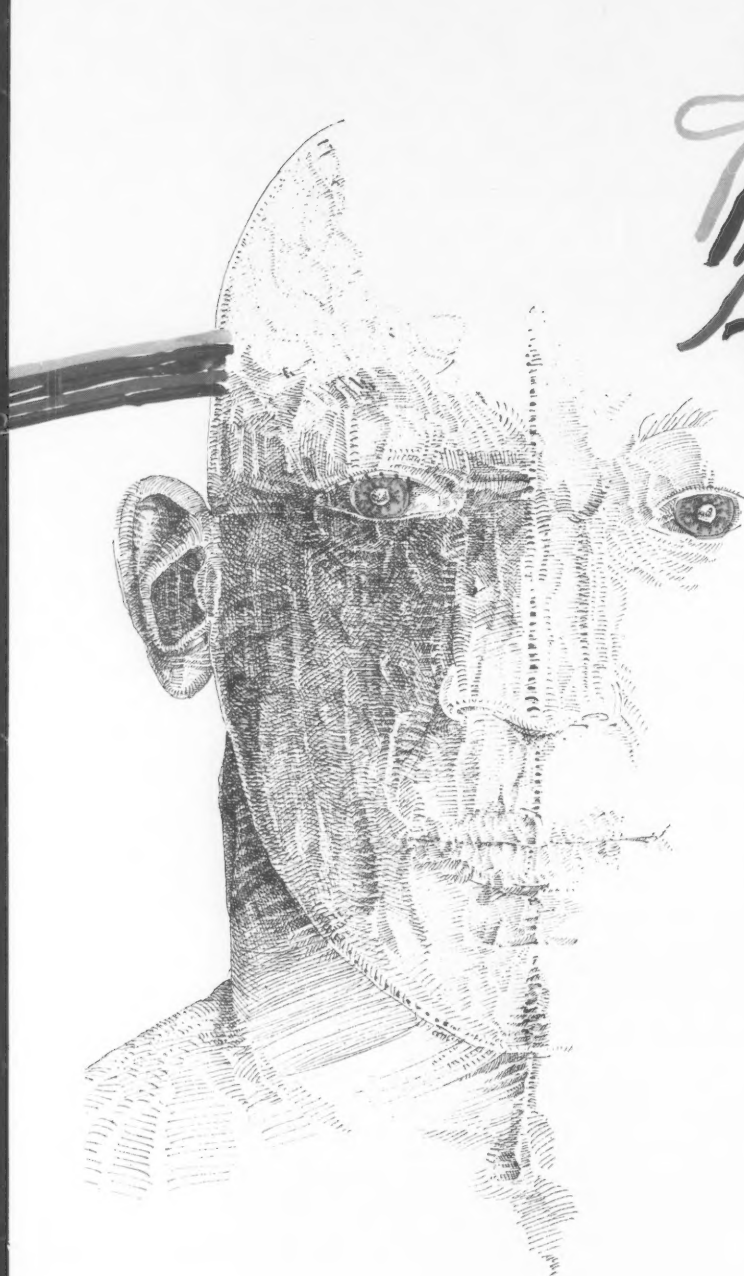
his first collection of interviews, *New Documentary in Action*, the latest mode was called "direct cinema," better remembered by its French name, *cinéma vérité*. The documentarians interviewed by Rosenthal claimed that a film could be a direct recording of reality, without intervention or alteration, manipulation or interpretation, by the filmmaker. The camera could be as inconspicuous as a fly on the wall, and presumably as objective. Looking back, it's possible to see how this inherently improbable notion connects to the empiricism, pragmatism, and "realism" that dominated politics, journalism, and the social sciences in the Eisenhower and Kennedy years.

Now, at the end of the 1970s, Rosenthal has collected another group of interviews, and found that many of his new subjects came to the film medium after involvement in the antiwar and women's liberation struggles of the Johnson-Nixon era. As might be expected, the theme of *The Documentary Conscience* is film as a tool of persuasion, a weapon in the battle for social change.

Partly in reaction against the passive stance of those flies on the wall, many in the new generation demand the opportunity to make their films as personal testaments, essays in the interpretation of reality. But some take an entirely different tack, completely eschewing personal expression in order to shape their films to the needs of interest groups that will use them as organizing or advocacy tools.

One truth that seems clear about documentaries, then, is that they tend to perpetuate the cultural values of an era just past. Stimulated by a burning contemporary issue, the documentarian plunges into months and years of labor to raise funds, shoot footage, edit the film, and find a way to reach an audi-

Robert Sklar is chairman of the Department of Cinema Studies at New York University and the author of the recently published Prime-Time America.



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ence. In terms of the writer's trade, it's more like doing a book than an article. Even the current affairs documentary often turns out, by the time it is seen, to be more like history, if not nostalgia.

Of course, investigative journalism in the print media may also involve months and years of preparation, but there is considerable evidence among Rosenthal's subjects that documentary films, even television news documentaries (no matter how they are promoted), can't really be understood as investigative journalism by visual means.

For one thing, the costs of filmmaking or videomaking are much greater than those of the equivalent newspaper or magazine investigation. Michael Latham, producer of a BBC documentary series, *Man Alive*, tells Rosenthal that budgetary problems are the reason "investigative journalism doesn't actually exist in television." Television producers, says Latham, have to pick subjects they can be certain will make a film documentary; their financial outlays do not permit them the luxury of starting an investigation that may not pan out after years of work. When television does offer a program that is the equivalent of investigative print journalism, he says, the "material and stories [presented] themselves by luck."

Moreover, documentary filmmaking is departing more and more from the traditions and standards of print journalism, which once had at least a tenuous foothold in television. Documentarians see themselves as filmmakers rather than journalists, with the goal of creating powerful visual images, and they focus their efforts on achieving their effects through technical and aesthetic means. They disdain the old-fashioned documentary that began with a written script which the filmmaker was hired, in effect, to illustrate. Almost any *NBC White Paper* or *CBS Report* would be an example.

That sort of documentary, heavy on voice-over narration, with images subordinate to text, relies "on a form of communicating information that I don't

think film is very good at," according to Roger Graef, the British filmmaker. "It's a literary form translated with pictures onto television or onto screen. It's basically visual/verbal."

Graef's work has its roots in *cinéma vérité* but has matured beyond the assertion of fly-on-the-wall objectivity that was once put forward by filmmakers like Frederick Wiseman. Graef's type of "direct" filmmaking may be called observational cinema. He tries to film a social process — for example, the way a decision is reached among industrial managers — by allowing the viewer to experience the event from many viewpoints (including, inevitably, the filmmaker's). There is little or no narration; the images carry the meaning.

In some cases, particularly in films using pre-existing archival footage, filmmakers' preference for the best possible image has led them to employ material that is visually apt but historically inaccurate. Jerome Kuehl, a producer on the Thames Television *World at War* series, had the task of assuring that accurate footage was used, even if not the prettiest picture. Even when there is no fudging of facts, however, Kuehl admits that filmmakers cannot avoid subjectively shaping their material: "Producers and editors have ways of endorsing, or dissociating themselves from, what participants say by the context in which they place them, the music they accompany them with, and the length of time they let them speak, and so on. There is nothing disreputable about that. It's the way film makers earn their living."

But it does create problems for viewers. They have not been taught the critical faculty of judging the bias — direct or indirect — in the techniques of documentary filmmaking, or even the lack of bias. Raye Farr, a researcher on the *World at War* series, relates that many viewers were incensed by the presentation, in one episode, of a German World War II veteran who denies the reality of the Holocaust: "Their as-

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sumption is: if a person's there on the screen, those people who make television programs must think what the person is saying is true. . . . it certainly awakened in me an awareness of how gullible an audience is to what is shown. Or how they don't know what to judge as real and unreal because of so much that's shown on television."

A similar observation leads Douglas Leiterman, a Canadian filmmaker, to the view that freedom of personal expression, in the hands of some filmmakers, can be a dangerous thing. "Some process is needed to protect the public and indeed to protect the man against himself. . . . I want to know that the interviews that I see are fairly edited, that they can stand the test of the publication of the entire transcript, that music is not brought in . . . in order to dramatize the point, that some process of experienced, journalistic judgment has been imposed."

How a documentary can be a good film while still being good journalism is thus one issue Rosenthal's interviewees raise, while another is, simply, what kind of journalism is it when it is good film. David Elstein, a Thames television documentary director, speaks of the inability of television actually to get information across to viewers, despite the high volume of "information" communicated. Jeremy Sandford, a British scriptwriter, misses the emotional power of drama, "the pity of it all," that documentaries convey only rarely. Film journalism has yet to attain its most effective form.

I find I'm quoting only the British subjects of Rosenthal's interviews. Perhaps because of the greater number and variety of documentaries on British television, the British documentarians (among whom are expatriate Americans) are more forthcoming on the subject of film journalism. It's worth comparing their views with the rhetorical stances adopted by Albert Wasserman, a producer on *60 Minutes*, or by Morton Silverstein, a documentarian from the early NET days of public television, currently with the WCBS program, *Eye On*. Wasserman denies that network documentaries have a point of view (shades of *cinéma vérité*! — though the

styles, of course, are quite different); Silverstein, at the other extreme, denies the need for balance. "I think there is often only one side to a story," Silverstein says, "despite the aphorisms to the contrary. There is only one side to the truth. There is only one truth."

Rosenthal also includes a number of interviews with American independent documentary filmmakers, among which those with Jill Godmilow (*Antonia*) and Ellen Hovde (*Grey Gardens*) are of particular interest. And then there are instructive interviews with several young Americans who veered from political involvement into filmmaking largely because they were astonished at how ignorant they were of the American past, and wanted to make films that would rectify that lack for themselves as well as others. *The Documentary Conscience*, as well as being a casebook on filmmaking, is a slice of social history.

Going with the flow

Floater by Calvin Trillin
Ticknor & Fields. 204 pp. \$9.95

by MARGO JEFFERSON

The newsmagazine as a kind of Mephistopheles, offering a gifted young Faust financial and institutional security in exchange for his talent and character — yes, we know that view. The newsmagazine as a joke, offering a young man of moderate talent and character triviality, fatuity, and button-down-collar merry pranksterism as well as security? That is the refreshing — and accurate — perspective offered by Calvin Trillin in his novel *Floater*.

As a floater in the *Back of the Book*, Fred Becker puts his uncluttered declarative sentences and knack for compression at the service of all sections but National and International News: Religion one week (millenarian sects), Business the next (Asian currency manipulation), Medicine another (dermatologist to the stars), then Lifestyle again and again (obscene topiary,

Margo Jefferson, formerly of Newsweek, is a free-lance writer and teaches journalism at New York University.

drownings in hot tubs). Though writers grounded in one department are given more credit for stability, and though *Back of the Book*, like back of the bus, suggests accommodation without consideration, Fred is reasonably content.

His contentment turns to curiosity, anxiety, and some ambition when an old friend who might be connected with the CIA, but might also be a chronic liar, offers him a top secret piece of information: the wife of the president of the United States is pregnant. Is the story true or not? How will he find out and what will he do if it is? Would the president's advisers permit an abortion? And, more important, can the story provide Fred with material for a best-selling novel of political suspense, which would win him what most newsmagazine writers crave — freedom via a book, screenplay, or sitcom pilot?

The plot thickens as Fred sets, or rather fumbles, out in pursuit of truth and fiction. Actually, the plot grows somewhat lumpy, as do the jokes from time to time. Trillin (who was once himself a floater at *Time*) has a quirky and amiable humor, best known to readers of *The New Yorker* and *The Nation*, that is part parody, part whimsy, and part farce; it's difficult to keep those elements in perfect balance for 204 pages. But how well he captures the mood and tone of the newsmagazine! The editors, dropping names and platitudes. The writers, updating weekly their list of office romances and grudges. The story conference, where the reader's presumed taste and the publisher's known bias are given equal time. And, above all, the story in progress, moving from writer to Senior Editor to Editor-in-Chief, as if up the Great Chain of Being. "I take out 2 of Baron's wildlife paragraphs. Baron puts 1 back in, takes out one of mine. I jiggle paragraphs. He jiggles them back. Sends it to Woody. Woody wants new version. Says it needs spark. I put in spark, also couple of paragraphs I had taken out before. Baron to Woody. Woody writes in 2 paragraphs on world peace . . . Then he writes in a paragraph about the Third World . . . Then he says he loves the story. Congratulates me. Tells me I'm a wiz." ■

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by Gloria
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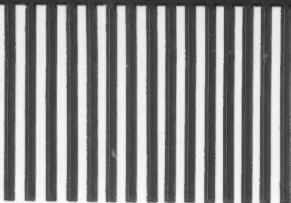
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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

On reflection

TO THE REVIEW:

One of the only positive outcomes of the Democratic and Republican conventions was the reportage of Nora Sayre ("Reflections on the Tube," *CJR*, September/October), which is a delight to read and contemplate. Bravos to you and Nora Sayre.

JOAN CROWELL
Queque, N.Y.

The gay connection

TO THE REVIEW:

"The Invisible Cubans" (*CJR*, September/October) certainly was a strange journalism lesson. Your executive editor, Michael Massing, chastised the press for having missed the fact that there were — allegedly! — a large number of homosexuals among the Cuban refugees who arrived in this country in April and thereafter. *CJR* tells us that the press was "curiously slow to report that many were gay."

Mr. Massing quotes, as an authoritative source, the managing editor of a gay-oriented newspaper who noted, "The press kept saying how single men were coming over in droves" without glimpsing the implications of that fact. The photograph accompanying the article re-emphasized the apparently conclusive evidence as to the homosexuality of these refugees: "Many Cuban refugees were single men, as on this boat arriving at Key West in early May. But most reporters didn't ask why."

Of course, in every immigration stream, whether legal or illegal, men — particularly young men — have been by far the overwhelming group. In every exodus, whether legal or illegal, young men have predominated and their wives, sweethearts, and families have followed, sometimes years later. It's therefore passing strange as to why anyone would have been particularly alerted to the fact that there were gays among the Cuban refugees, merely by virtue of the fact that so many of them were young men.

Another clue Mr. Massing offers us as to the presence of gays among the Cuban refugees is the fact that "The term 'undesirable' is often used to refer to homosexuals in Cuba." Would the editor of the gay-oriented newspaper whom Mr. Massing quotes really

have been delighted if reporters had, in fact, jumped on the fact that the word "undesirable" is often used regarding homosexuals? In fact, would the gay community have been pleased had reporters gotten onto this alleged story earlier and filled their papers with articles about an influx of homosexuals from Cuba? One suspects that had the press played up this particular aspect of this story, the gay-oriented press would have howled — and I think justifiably — in protest.

Even stranger is the fact that neither Mr. Massing nor anyone else has provided any real documentation as to whether the number of homosexuals among refugees is any greater than is to be expected in any other population. Is the damning fact that one reporter saw "pairs of men and women walking hand in hand" an indication of obvious gayness or of Latin culture? Do we have any real evidence of any kind that there were 20,000 gays among the refugees?

And does anyone really care? After all, I thought that the whole idea of the gay rights movement.

MICHAEL J. HALBERSTAM, M.D.
Washington, D.C.

TO THE REVIEW:

Dart to *CJR* for its article on the coverage of the homosexual Cubans.

The Morning Call in Allentown, Pennsylvania, reported the story along with photographs on June 17, three weeks before *The Washington Post*. While some journalists may have dodged the story in response to signals sent out by their editors, the *Call* did not. There were editors here who were uncomfortable with the story, so both the story and the photographs were edited very carefully. However, they were never uncomfortable to the point of refusing to recognize it for the legitimate news story it was.

CJR was wrong when it said that the White House leak to the *Post* represented perhaps the first information from any official source recording the presence of homosexuals among the Cubans and that officials of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had been mum on the subject since the opening of the camps.

Officials of both FEMA and INS were quoted in *The Morning Call* story. Almost a month before the *Post* ran its story, FEMA

and INS officials confirmed for us that there were homosexuals among the Cubans. An FEMA spokesman also confirmed that at Fort Chaffee and at Fort Indiantown Gap homosexuals were living in separate barracks at their own request.

There was another official source of information: the army. At Fort Indiantown Gap, an army commander not only confirmed that there were two barracks of homosexual men in his area but accompanied us to one of them, where, through an interpreter, we interviewed about half the residents.

We never saw the numbers as the central fact of our story. The story was in the presence of the homosexuals among the refugees and, to paraphrase *CJR*, the insight they provided into the refugees' reasons for leaving Cuba, the resettlement process, and this country's immigration policies.

The Morning Call did not need a White House imprimatur to legitimize the story. By far, the majority of reporters in the country do not have access to White House officials who leak information. However, when there is a story to get, ways can be found to confirm it by reporters who are willing to go after it and who have editors to support them.

And sometimes we get there before *The Washington Post*.

MARY ANN FAY, reporter
RANDY COX, photographer
Call-Chronicle Newspapers
Allentown, Pa.

TO THE REVIEW:

I read with interest Michael Massing's "The Invisible Cubans," but as a reporter for the *Lebanon Daily News* and *Sunday Pennsylvanian* who covered the Cuban refugee story at Fort Indiantown Gap, I contest his assertion that the presence of homosexual refugees was thoughtlessly "ignored" by reporters.

The *Sunday Pennsylvanian* ran a front-page story about Cuban gays on July 6 (the day before the *Washington Post* article) even though we had known of the homosexual refugees at the beginning of the resettlement process. In fact, the photo we used with our story was taken a month earlier.

We realized that a story about the gays would eventually be written, but without a solid reason for singling out this particular

group it seemed callous and irresponsible to write a story at that time.

For us, the proper time to do the story came when a California congressman initiated a move to have a section of the federal immigration law, which lists homosexuality as an excludable offense, repealed. The law, considered unenforceable, would have had a direct effect on the Cuban gays, who, like the 19,094 other Cubans to pass through Lebanon County, were technically illegal aliens and would have been deported.

When we begin writing stories about minorities simply because they are minorities, we lose sight of responsible journalism and begin pandering to sensationalism. The subject was covered when the facts supported the story, and that, it seems, was the right time.

GARRY LENTON
Lebanon, Pa.

Michael Massing replies: *Dr. Halberstam and I clearly differ as to the legitimacy of reporting on the gay presence among the refugees. There is one point of fact, however, that I would like to make clear. My article does not, as Dr. Halberstam implies, cite the presence of single young men as the sole evidence of the gay presence. The article clearly mentions that fact as only the most visible of many indicators that a significant proportion of the refugees were homosexual. The two other letters above confirm that there were many gays among the refugees — and that their presence was readily ascertainable at an early date.*

That zigzag Court

TO THE REVIEW:

Bruce Sanford writes of *Gannett Co., Inc., v. DePasquale* that the "majority of five justices . . . ignored the entire question of the public's First Amendment right to attend pretrial proceedings ('*Richmond Newspapers: End of a Zigzag Trail?*')" *CJR*, September/October).

In fact, Justice Stewart, writing for that majority, specifically entertained the possibility that such a right might exist, and carefully explained why, in the Court's view, "the actions of the trial judge . . . were consistent with any right of access the [press and public] may have had under the First and Fourteenth Amendments."

Moreover, Justice Powell, one of the *Gannett* majority, wrote separately: "Because of the importance of the public's having accurate information concerning the operation of its criminal justice system, I would

hold explicitly that [the public and press] had an interest protected by the First and Fourteenth Amendments in being present at the pretrial suppression hearing."

Indeed, it was Justice Blackmun, writing for the four dissenting Justices in *Gannett*, who gave the newspaper's First Amendment claim short shrift, concluding simply that, "[t]o the extent the Constitution protects a right of public access to the proceeding, the standards enunciated under the Sixth Amendment suffice to protect that right."

These facts should be considered in assessing the degree and nature of the Court's "shift," as Mr. Sanford calls it, from *Gannett* to *Richmond Newspapers*.

DAVID H. REMES
Boston, Mass.

Bruce W. Sanford replies: *The opinion of the Court in Gannett, written by Justice Stewart, avoided the opportunity to address the issue of the public's First Amendment right to attend court proceedings. As Justice White noted in his two-sentence concurring opinion in Richmond Newspapers, the First Amendment issue would not have had to have been addressed a year later had the Court decided Gannett differently.*

Too tough on Birmingham?

TO THE REVIEW:

It is disturbing to read in a journal that purports to review the performance of our profession an article which strays so far from the standards which we have set for ourselves as journalists — such things as objectivity, fairness, and, yes, truthfulness. Stephen Barlas's "Birmingham Press Gets Tough — on Blacks" (*CJR*, July/August), on coverage of the nomination of five men, two of them black, for Alabama federal judgeships, alleges that *The Birmingham News* and the *Post-Herald* were "tougher" on the two black nominees than on the white ones, the implication being that the coverage was deliberately slanted because of race. Speaking for *The Birmingham News*, I can assure that that is false.

The *News* assigned two reporters for most of a month to look into the backgrounds of all five nominees. At the end of that time, they wrote full profiles on all the candidates. The profiles were given identical play on page 2. Some breaking stories on the two black nominees were played on page 1 on the basis of their newsworthiness — just as the historic swearing in of one of the black nominees as Alabama's first black federal judge got page 1 treatment far more extensive than that given the new white judges,

based on the relative newsworthiness of the events. Is that such an odd news standard?

JAMES E. JACOBSON
The Birmingham News
Birmingham, Ala.

TO THE REVIEW:

As one of the editors quoted (barely) in "Birmingham Press Gets Tough — on Blacks," I would like to respond. I spent fifty-eight minutes on the phone (I paid for the call) with reporter Stephen Barlas and out of that comes the acknowledgment by me that our coverage was "imperfect."

From the opening graf, Barlas chose to ignore our fifty-eight minutes. He cites a demonstration in front of our building protesting coverage by both Birmingham dailies, citing twenty-two "journalistic irregularities" that had "victimized" two black attorneys nominated for federal judgeships.

The demonstration, as I pointed out, had been announced beforehand in our newspaper as a statewide march called by blacks to voice disapproval. Less than fifty people showed up. There were almost fifty counterpickets at the march, protesting the lack of qualifications of one of the black nominees. All of the pickets were black.

As for the twenty-two "irregularities" (not all of which were against this newspaper), I read Mr. Barlas an item-by-item rebuttal, which was ignored.

Mr. Barlas also takes us to task because "both papers obtained their investigative fodder almost exclusively from Alabama's white establishment." He chose to ignore that I said I didn't give a damn who the sources were, as long as the information checked out — just as I didn't when we wrote on the front page about prior charges of brutality against a white police officer accused of shooting to death a black woman. The original source on that story was black.

Yes, I did say we might have made mistakes. I also said we make mistakes every day and work like hell to overcome them. I also told him if I had it to do over I would pursue stories about the black judicial candidates as aggressively as we did those about the white police officer. I made no apologies then and I make none now.

I also repeatedly asked Mr. Barlas to talk to the two reporters who covered most of the story, emphasizing that they could probably clear up any questions about "failings" on our part. Neither was ever contacted. But then I guess he had all the quotes he didn't need anyway.

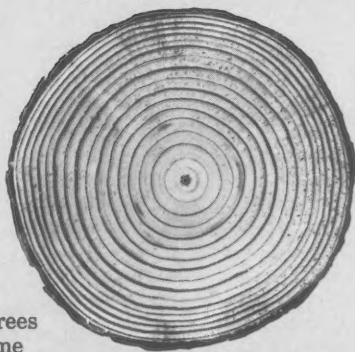
ANGUS McEACHRAN
Editor
Birmingham Post-Herald
Birmingham, Ala.

continued

A report on the great American forest.

Look what happens when Mother Nature gets a little help.

These log slices dramatically show the value of modern, scientific forest management. Both (shown 36% of actual size) are from trees of about the same age. The smaller one grew in an unmanaged, overcrowded stand where it had to compete for sunlight and moisture. The other is from a grove that was thinned to give the best trees room to thrive.



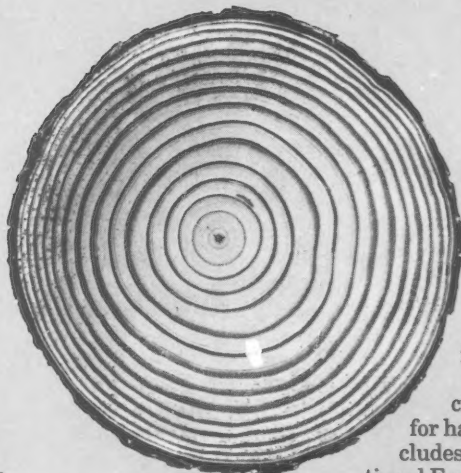
This is just one of many ways forest management can help meet a predicted doubling of domestic demand for wood and paper products in the next 50 years.

The forest industry has learned how to help Mother Nature grow more trees, faster, by applying scientific forest management techniques: encouraging natural regrowth, planting superior seeds and seedlings, fertilizing, protecting against disease and insects, thinning, watching carefully until time to harvest — then starting the cycle again.

Demand keeps rising.

Forest management like this is vital because every year Americans need more homes, more paper products, more packaging and containers, more fuelwood, more of the thousands of other essential products that only the forest can provide.

So far, the country's commercial forest has been able to keep up with demand. (*Commercial forest*, as defined by the U.S. Forest Service, is *all* forestland—whether owned by individuals, government or the



industry—that is capable of, and potentially available for, growing repeated crops of trees for harvest. It includes land in National Forests but not

in National Parks or Wilderness areas.)

But trees aren't grown equally fast by all commercial forest owners. Though industry has made striking advances on its lands, productivity is lower on privately owned lands and seriously lagging in National Forests.

Productivity not up to potential.

Overall, the U.S. Forest Service estimates average productivity of all commercial forestland is only 61 percent of potential. And at the same time, actual acreage in commercial forests keeps shrinking, as land is withdrawn for homes, highways and other needs of an expanding population.

So we as a nation still have a long way to go if our wood and paper products are not to become scarce and expensive.

If you'd like to be better informed on how important it is to keep America's forests productive, write American Forest Institute, P.O. Box 873, Springfield, VA 22150 for a free booklet, "The Great American Forest."

The great American forest. Trees for tomorrow. And tomorrow. And all the tomorrows after that.



Trees. America's renewable resource.

Stephen Barlas replies: *Mr. Jacobson alleges my story lacked "objectivity, fairness, and . . . truthfulness," but he fails to back up those strong words with a single example.*

The profiles he refers to were a small part of the News's year-long coverage of the judgeship story. But since he brings them up, it is interesting to note the headlines of those five stories, keeping in mind that the professional qualifications of the two blacks were considered excellent, even by those who were less enthusiastic about them for other reasons.

For the three whites, the headlines read: 'COURT GIANTS' HANG IN NOMINEE'S OFFICE; PROPST DESCRIBED AS BRIGHT, WELL-PREPARED AND INNOVATIVE; HALTOM KNOWN AS METICULOUS LAWYER.

For the blacks: QUESTIONABLE ACTIONS MAR GRAY'S RECORD, and CLEMON'S TOP INTEREST IS RIGHTS.

To reply to Mr. McEachran, my point about the sources was that there existed an organized attempt to scuttle the Gray nomination. One Alabama attorney spent the better part of a year documenting Gray's alleged ineptitude and depravity. His effort was aided by numerous white attorneys around the state. At the May Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearings on Gray, the attorney, J. Michael Rediker, testified: "The newspapers started coming to me last year. And I would say it's fair to say the newspapers came to me, and they have. It reached the point where I told my secretary not to take any more calls. . . ."

I think a story about Rediker's efforts and those who were helping him would have been legitimate news.

As for my not having contacted "the two reporters who covered most of the story," I must point out that I did interview a third reporter who wrote many of the stories referred to in the article.

In defense of sicko headline

TO THE REVIEW:

I see you awarded a dart (CJR, September/October) to *The Sacramento Bee* for headlining a story of a passerby struck by a dog tossed from a window above: **DOGGED BRAIN INJURIES FINALLY KILL WOMAN.**

As the author of the headline, let me give a rabid defense. It fits the story. It was one of those bizarre, macabre stories we in the business relish so much. Wire service editors picked it up all along the line. What was the news value in that story? A tragic tale of one woman's death from long-term brain injuries? That wouldn't have gone anywhere.

The news value in the story was its appeal to our sicko natures: here's another one of life's absurdities coming down the pike. We journalists love that weird stuff. We feed it to our readers constantly.

But take credit for doing that? Not on your journalistic high standards. We objective news hounds bend over backwards to hide our hypocrisy. That story appealed to our sense of life's perversity and I suspect most readers chuckled before their consciences strangled the laughter in their throats. The headline was as sick as the story and didn't shy away from the point. Some headlines don't need to have their words washed in a pool of journalistic hypocrisy.

PAUL CLEGG
Copy editor
The Sacramento Bee
Sacramento, Calif.

Traveling salesman, retold

TO THE REVIEW:

The Review has embarrassed itself by publishing "Have You Heard the One About the Traveling Salesman?" (CJR, July/August).

The *Times*'s first article last November 7 did not say that the traveling salesman problem had been solved. It did imply that the problem had been solved. So did the article in *Science* which was the primary source for our article. The most accurate description of our story is that it was garbled and that the *Times* did not understand the complexities of linear programming and how the Russian work was related to the field. We mistakenly thought the work might apply to secret codes.

Mr. Weiner says scientists wrote letters of protest and invited reporters to attend "several" professional talks on the Russian work, "but the *Times* acknowledged no letters, attended no meetings, printed no retractions." He should ascertain the facts.

No mathematician ever telephoned any of the four editors in the *Times*'s science news department to discuss the Russian work at any point following our story. A month after the first story, a letter was sent to the letters to the editor department. Signed by four mathematicians from Columbia, Stanford, and IBM, it indicated that copies were sent to me and Walter Sullivan, another science news department staff member. These copies were not received. The letter was so obscure that publishing it would have left our readers puzzled about its meaning. It could scarcely be called a letter of "protest."

Mr. Weiner says we ignored invitations to attend "professional talks." Last January we were invited by Columbia's public relations

office to attend a lecture by the university's new computer science chairman, Joseph Traub. The invitation did not say that the talk would focus on the Russian work, that we might have misinterpreted it, or that covering the lecture would be a good opportunity to set the record straight. No one was available from our staff that day to attend the lecture.

On February 8 about 100 American and foreign mathematicians convened at Columbia specifically to discuss the Russian work. In a telephone conversation several weeks after the meeting, Philip Wolfe of IBM at first was uncertain about whether we had been mailed invitations, then later said they had been sent. If they were mailed, they were not received.

After the February meeting, Professor Traub of Columbia sent another letter listing five conclusions about the Russian work that the mathematicians had reached. Again, publishing the letter would have left readers confused. But this was the first indication that our story had been wrong and that a corrective story was in order. We began preparation at once and published it March 21.

Mr. Weiner chooses to sneer at this article, quoting two linear programming experts who felt we were not apologetic enough. He apparently was unaware of the letter that Philip Wolfe of IBM and chairman of The Mathematical Programming Society sent. It read:

Mathematics is not an easy game to follow, and with a topic as new as Khachian's work in linear programming it should not be alarming that even *The Times*' distinguished science writers could call a play wrong. The followup article accurately and handsomely sets the record straight and reaffirms the faith of the scientific community in a great newspaper.

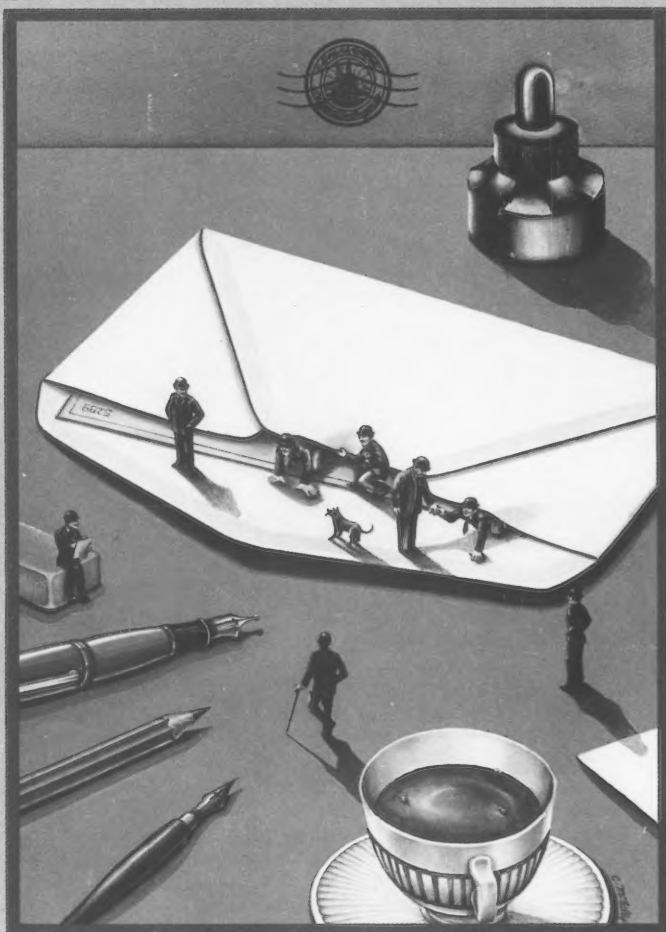
WILLIAM STOCKTON
Director of science news
The New York Times

Jonathan Weiner replies: *I interviewed Mr. Stockton in the course of preparing my story and quoted his own explanation of the affair. As for Philip Wolfe, his opinions seem to have changed considerably since we last spoke. Interested readers should look up the paper's "retraction" (March 21, 1980, p. A13) and judge its candor or lack thereof for themselves.*

Deadline

The editors welcome and encourage letters from readers. To be considered for publication in the January/February issue, letters to the Review should be received by November 21. Letters are subject to editing for clarity and space.

"Chief, there's
more to this case
than meets
the eye!"



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REPORTS

Up the Masthead, by Christine Doudna with Carla Rupp, Savy, September 1980

Statistics come alive in this uncommon report about some uncommon women — that exclusive but growing sisterhood of journalists who have inched their way up the mastheads of the nation's 1,769 dailies into positions of managerial power. The candid discussion touches on institutions as well as individuals, history as well as trends.

Probably the most indicative sampling of conditions for women, say the authors, can be found at the Big Three. At the progressive *Washington Post*, several women, including influential editorial-page editor Meg Greenfield, hold key decision-making jobs, although all the top section editors are men. (Publisher Donald Graham, the authors suggest hopefully, may bring more enthusiasm to the cause of women than did his legendary mother, chairman Katharine.) The rich, nonunionized *Los Angeles Times*, whose high-salary tradition has staved off women's protests, can boast one woman assistant metro editor and one woman associate editor, but has no women at the center of power. *The New York Times*, since the out-of-court settlement of the bitter discrimination suit in 1978, has handed some journalistic plums to such women as foreign affairs columnist Flora Lewis and Living, Home, and Style editor Nancy Newhouse, as well as op-ed editor Charlotte Curtis — but has yet to admit women to its inner sanctum.

Tokenism or not, the opportunity is genuine enough, and as Doudna and Rupp note, although some organizations have no doubt catapulted women into flashy executive jobs for dubious reasons, others seem truly committed to progressive hiring and promotion programs for women and minorities (the most notable being the eighty-two-paper Gannett chain, which today can point to eight women on its publishers' roster). Further encouraging signs can be found at a scattering of big-city dailies across the country, where women hold managerial posts at *The Boston Globe*, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Christian Sci-*

ence Monitor, the *San Diego Union*, and the *San Francisco Examiner*. The telling point, however, the authors ruefully remind us, is that the list is so short.

In a particularly provocative insight, the report focuses on what well may be a new development in journalism: the extraordinary opportunities for women at major afternoon papers in search of a new lease on life — for example, *The Washington Star*, the capital's "other paper," where half the business reporters are women; the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, where innovation now is policy, and the managing editor, city editor, and half the editorial page writers are women; and *The Miami News*, where managing editor Gloria Anderson daily faces the challenge of the Number One *Herald*. The implication that women somehow bring a different perspective, a greater sensitivity, to the news is, for some, a touchy point; so, too, is the question of how aggressive women in the news business should now be in pursuing full equality with men. As Doudna and Rupp see it, differing attitudes reflect a generational gap: while the veteran newswoman urges that the battle is not yet over, the rising young star at the paper wonders what the fuss was all about. It would be nice if the old timers were wrong, but don't bet on it just yet.

The Media at Mid-Year: A Bad Year for McLuhanites? by Michael Robinson with Nancy Conover and Margaret Sheehan, *Public Opinion*, June/July 1980

Did the news media act as kingmakers in election 1980? Noting the widely held view that the way the press covered the last two presidential campaigns substantially affected their outcome, a team of researchers at George Washington University has performed an early post mortem on the current event. This aspect of their study confines itself to one TV program (the weekday evening news) on one network (CBS) during the period January 1 through June 4, 1980, the day after the last of the primaries.

On the basis of a close analysis of some 730 stories on the campaign and the candi-

dates — comprising a third of all the program's news reports during that time — the researchers conclude that, contrary to previous complaints of network bias, 1980 campaign coverage of Republicans and Democrats alike was objective and free from philosophical and political partisanship. On the other hand, they emphasize, it was also pretty shallow. With rare exceptions (such as Lesley Stahl's six-and-a-half-minute stand-up explaining how the White House made political hay with its timing of grant announcements, public appearances, and official statements), CBS stayed carefully away from the deep waters of candidates' competence, personal integrity, and consistency on issues, hugging the safe journalistic shore of "successfulness" — mainly reporting, as usual, on who was ahead. Fifty-four percent of campaign news time, and two-thirds of all campaign stories, were devoted to evaluations of success or failure; 17 percent to issues.

Among their most significant findings, the authors believe, is that in 1980 the trend to front-loading, that is, the heavy concentration on the early primaries and caucuses, grew more severe: states with February races averaged eighteen stories each, while those whose primaries were held in May got only two stories apiece — and by the time the big ones came along on Super Tuesday they were practically ignored. As the authors see it, this tendency of the press to give too much attention to the early contests — and the early winners — is balanced later by its other tendency to cover front-runners more negatively than their rivals. The net effect has been fewer bandwagons in recent years.

The authors note one interesting departure from evenhandedness in CBS's treatment of John Anderson. By the end of the week of the Massachusetts and Vermont primaries, according to their content analysis, he had accumulated more favorable press on CBS than any other candidate — perhaps, they speculate, because he was an articulate, liberal, Republican and, above all, a new face who didn't have a chance. And, they point out, the 300 "official" stories about Jimmy

Carter, mostly related to the hostage crisis in Iran and the invasion of Afghanistan — in the first fourteen weekdays of January prior to the Iowa caucuses Carter appeared on the *CBS Evening News* twenty-four times in his role as head of state — may have had at least as much impact on the course of the campaign as the campaign stories themselves.

In short, the authors conclude, CBS covered the early months of campaign '80 along the traditional lines of commercial television, with its commitment to objectivity, to hostility to front-runners, and to the horse race. Such a course is not without political consequences, but neither is it the electronic equivalent of a smoke-filled room.

Airplane Accidents, Murder, and the Mass Media: Towards a Theory of Imitation and Suggestion, by David Phillips, *Social Forces*, June 1980

The power of suggestion may be a first principle of advertising, but its function in other media is not quite so clear. Here a social scientist at the University of California at San Diego presents the latest findings in his continuing study of the impact of news on social behavior.

Phillips's earlier research had recorded a correlation between published reports of suicides and an increased number of both suicides and car accidents (which could be suicides in disguise) involving persons of a similar age and in the same geographical area. Now, he explains, it was time to test his theory further: would published stories about murder-suicides — that is, the situation in which one person murders others and then takes his own life — correlate with an increased number of similar horrors? Phillips predicted that they would. Working on the premise that an airplane crash might well be caused by a pilot consciously or unconsciously bent on murder-suicide, Phillips hypothesized that an increased number of multi-fatality air crashes would follow news stories of murder-suicides reported either on the front page of *The New York Times* or of the *Los Angeles Times*, or on the ABC, CBS, or NBC network evening news. As it

turned out, he found there was an increase in the number of such crashes, thereby establishing to his satisfaction — though not, perhaps, to that of all his readers — the validity of his seemingly bizarre hypothesis.

Having bolstered, as he sees it, earlier evidence that news reports trigger imitative behavior, Phillips goes on to appeal for the development of a sociological theory of imitation. Lines of legitimate future inquiry, he believes, may be suggested by extending the analogy between biological and cultural contagion: Does the three-to-four-day time lag, for example, which he noted between published reports of the murder-suicide and the increase in crashes, represent a kind of period of incubation? Is immunization against "cultural contamination" possible? Is the "infection" spread most effectively through the medium of television or of newspapers — or, perhaps, as it is in advertising, through word of mouth? And what may be inferred about the value of a news "quarantine?" Editors may not regard Phillips's controversial findings as sufficiently persuasive to act on, but they may derive some comfort from data he has collected showing that stories of murder-suicides when published on an inside page, rather than on page one, correlate with absolutely nothing at all.

Writing with Light, *Nieman Reports*, Summer 1980

The many angles of photojournalism are the focus of this splendid entry in the quarterly's series of single-subject issues. In what amounts to an illustrated lecture, Barbara P. Norfleet's introductory essay describes the role of the photographer in social reform at the turn of the century, when the developing art of photography and the developing awareness of the plight of the poor met for the first time. Tracing the subtle but dramatic shifts in portrayals of immigrants, orphans, laborers, and newsboys that accompanied the historic shift in society's approach to deprivation, Norfleet notes that while yesterday's photojournalists used their cameras as a social tool, today's professionals have set their

middle-class sights on making good pictures. In "The Magazine Picture," *National Geographic* director of photography Robert E. Gilka delivers some straight talk on the declining stature of professional photography in journalism. The burden of restoring the profession's prestige, he contends, must be on the photographers in the newsroom — where the need and action are — and he exhorts his colleagues there to educate their editors to good photography and to educate themselves so that they are equally at home in the world of pictures and the world of words: one of the fundamental problems, he believes, is that in many photojournalists there is "too much photography — and too little journalism."

The centerpiece of the collection is a group of portfolios of photographs by five Nieman alumni, each accompanied by a background sketch and personal observations. Robert Azzi, noted for his visual insights into Arab life, reflects on the role of the photojournalist in the world of conflict; Howard Sochurek, whose photo essays range from the space industry to religions of the East, considers the use of the computer in producing electronic art photography and "new ways to see"; and Steve Northup, whose haunting images of Vietnam have lost none of their power to disturb, discusses the potential — and limitations — of "writing with light." Taking pictures, Northup observes, is a very apt phrase: "We do take from our subjects and take something only they can give to us: their individual, personal, often private image. This is a physical thing, and must be treated with profound respect."

Other pieces in the package include Jonathan Larsen's optimistic review of *Life* old and new; a look at *The Wall Street Journal*'s philosophy of graphics; a fond reminiscence of Weegee the Famous; an excerpt from the biography of Jessie Tarbox Beals; and the amusing recollections of a paparazzi's Sinatra stalk. Altogether, an illuminating picture of an aspect of journalism that too often gets cropped by editors, educators, and journalism reviews. G.C.

The diamond solitaire.



A rare gift.

One single diamond.
Set simply and elegantly, to sparkle on its own.
The diamond solitaire.
A jewel that becomes more precious with
every passing year.
The gift that makes a rare and beautiful
moment last a lifetime.
A diamond is forever.

The 1 1/2 carat diamond shown is enlarged for detail. De Beers.

The Lower case

Kicking Baby Considered to Be Healthy

The Burlington (Vt.) Free Press 9/18/80

Although he's been dead for 19 years, thanks to the dedication and determination of one Rochester woman, Edgar Guest has not gone forgotten.

The Rochester (Mich.) Clarion 8/7/80

Asbestos suit pressed

The Oregonian 7/18/80

Stalemate Possible As Attack Slows

By Dummy Byline

The Washington Star 9/29/80

New techniques loom as famed brothel changes hands

The Morning News (Wilmington, Del.) 8/28/80

Now, Penthouse publisher Bob Guccione will be donated to charity, probably to the Metropolitan Opera.

The Times-Herald (Newport News, Va.) 10/2/80

Murder delayed

Daily Times and Chronicle (Woburn, Mass.) 8/1/80

Neighbors organize to restore eyesores

The Bergen (N.J.) News 6/25/80

Offensive nominees top the polls in Heisman election

Arizona Daily Star 9/11/80

Terminal smog not lethal

Valdez (Alaska) Vanguard 8/6/80

FORMER PRESIDENT ENTERS DINAH SHORE

The Desert Sun (Palm Springs, Calif.) 3/28/80

Italian gunmen shoot typsetter by mistake

The Philadelphia Inquirer 9/3/80

Neanderthal man barbecued

The (Vancouver, Wash.) Columbian 8/26/80

Giant Panda Gives Birth to Baby Boy

NEW YORK, N.Y. (AP) — Running back Herschel Walker of Wrightsville, Ga., was named the most talented overall player on the 60-member Parade Magazine all-American high school football team, announced Saturday.

No Iowans were named to the team.

Winford Hood of Atlanta, Ga., was selected the best lineman; Jeff Leiding of Tulsa, Okla., was picked after suffering a heart attack. He is survived by his wife, Pauline, two sons and five grandchildren.

Des Moines Register 12/30/79

Lexington (Ky.) Herald 8/13/80

Ceremony Ends Careers Of 38 Seniors

The Wyoming (Ill.) Post-Herald 6/4/80

High wind causes outrages

Evening Capital (Annapolis, Md.) 3/22/80

California sheriff wants man shot by patrolman

The Cincinnati Post 7/24/80

Consumer Orientation
No. 9 in a Series
Subject: The Race Track
as Proving Ground

Porsche 924 Turbo



Three 924 Turbo Carrera racers began Le Mans this year with 62 other entrants. After 24 grueling hours, more than 3,000 miles, and 8,500 gear shifts, all three 924 Turbos finished. In fact, one finished sixth overall.

At Porsche, our goal is to put the best engineering into our cars. But for every problem, there are a number of solutions. And the merits of each one can be debated endlessly. So for us, the ultimate test is racing. Because on the track, under the stresses, surprises, and realities of competition, the best solution will win. Using the race track as a proving ground is expensive, and often frustrating. But we believe the rewards are well worth it. What we learn from our race cars, we put into our street cars. At Porsche, excellence is expected.

The 917 Turbo Can-Am champion made turbocharging practical for road racers with its unique bypass valve system—standard equipment on the 924 Turbo street car. Test drive the 924 Turbo. For your nearest dealer call toll-free: (800) 447-4700. In Illinois, 800-322-4400.

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